

KURUKSHETRA, GAYA AND BODH-GAYA

BY

SARASVATI

SARKAR

KRAMBACH

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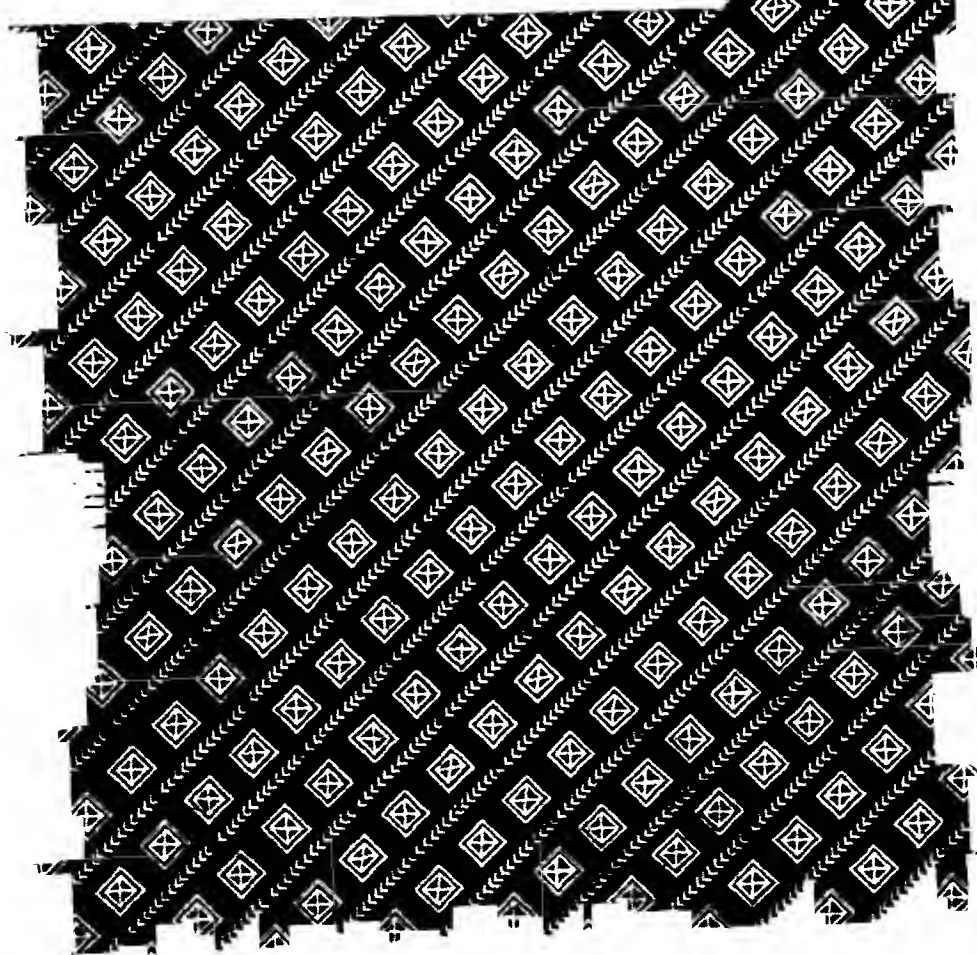
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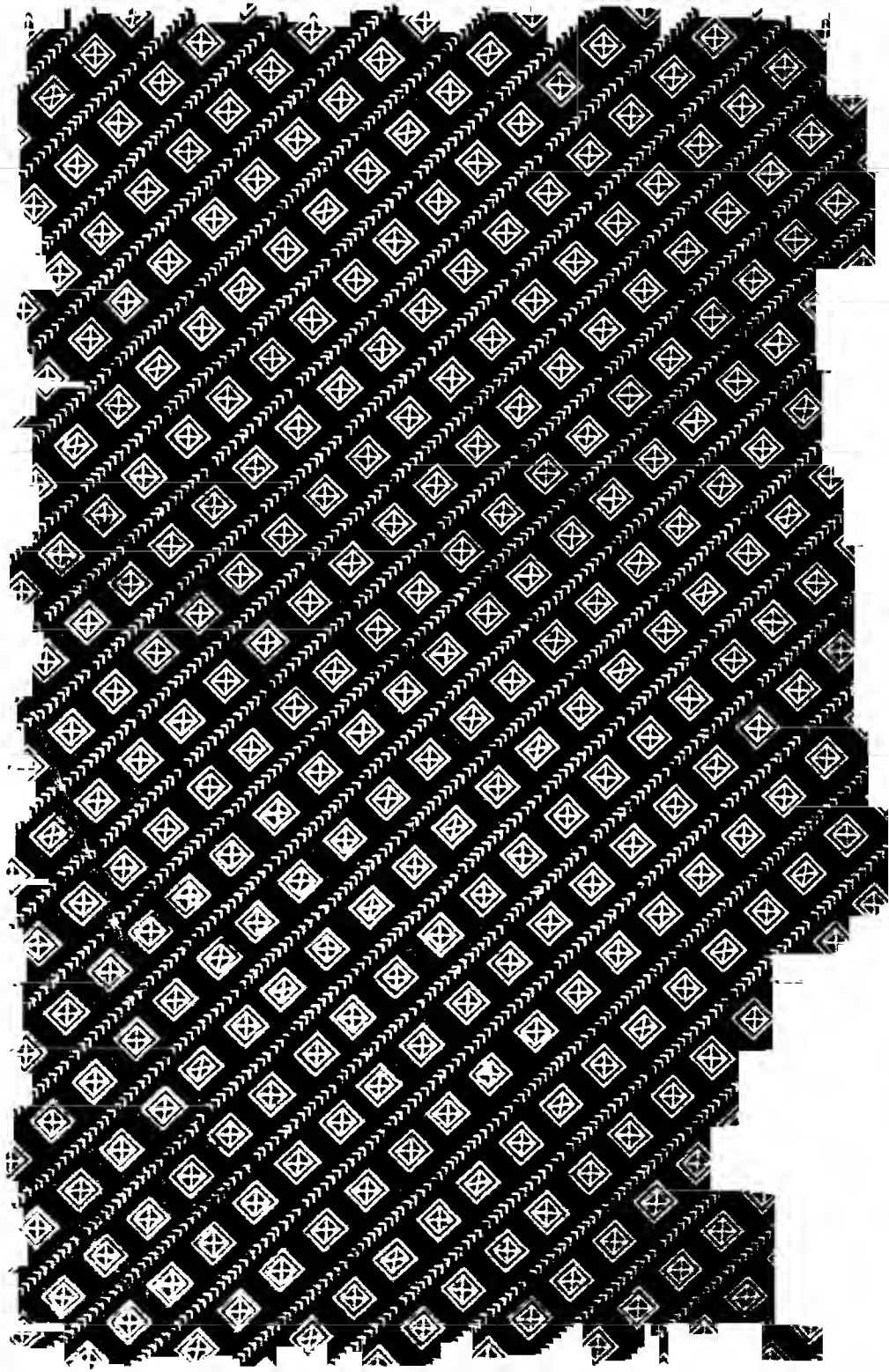
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# KURKIHAR, GAYA AND BODH-GAYA

(with eighteen illustrations)

*Comprising*

## KURKIHAR

BY

Sarasi Kumar Sarasvati, M. A.

AND

Kshitish Chandra Sarkar, M. A., B. L.

WITH

*A Note on the metal images*

BY

Dr. Stella Kramrisch

AND

## GAYA AND BODH-GAYA

BY

Kshitish Chandra Sarkar, M. A., B. L.

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DEDICATED  
TO  
THE SACRED MEMORY  
OF

My revered Gurudeva,

**Akshaya Kumar Maitreya, B. L., C. I. F.,**  
*Director, Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi.*

Born—January, 1862.

Died—February, 1930.

*Kshitish Chandra Sarkar*





## PREFACE

I visited Kurkihar, with Mr. Sarasi Kumar Sarasvati, M. A., on two days during the Christmas week of 1931. We took notes and photographs of some of the newly discovered bronzes and other antiquities of the place including its present shrine of Devasthan. On our return to Rajshahi we wrote a paper which we read at a literary conference of the Varendra Research Society on the 26th and 27th March, 1932. I communicated later the substance of the paper to the Oriental Conference held at Baroda in December 1933. With a view to publishing the paper in book form we submitted it to Dr. Stella Kramrisch, who very kindly wrote an introductory note on it.

There has been some delay in bringing out the book. Meanwhile the bronzes have been removed to the Patna Museum and cleaned there, and Mr. K. P. Jayaswal has published an illustrated article on them, entitled "Metal images of Kurkihar monastery" with a note by Dr. Stella Kramrisch, in the *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art* for March 1935. We are happy to find that though we could take but a few photographs, they include the most remarkable of the images discovered. We have added information derived from Mr. Jayaswal's article in the form of supplementary foot-notes, distinguished from our original ones by the addition of the letters, (a), (b), etc.

In this trip we also visited Gaya and Bodh-Gaya, and later I made a further study of their antiquarian remains on the spot. My account of the history and certain hitherto unnoticed antiquities of these two places is included in this book, as they along with Kurkihar form one archæological group.

Our thanks are due to Dr. Stella Kramrisch for her valuable note, and to the Varendra Research Society of Rajshahi and Kumar Amitabha Roy, M.A., of Dayarampur, for the photographs reproduced in Figs. 2 and 11 respectively. I am obliged to Mr. Nagendra Nath Sarkar, B. L., of Gaya for the photograph of Fig. 14. The rest of the photographs were taken by Mr. Sarasvati.

I am indebted to Mr. Bijaynath Sarkar, C. E., for helping me to complete the account of Gaya by personal visits after mine and for seeing the work through the press.

RAJSHAHI  
February, 1936.

Kshitish Chandra Sarkar.

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## A NOTE ON THE METAL IMAGES OF KURKI HAR

The group of metal images from Kurkihar, many of them gold-plated, is closely related to metal images from Nalanda in Bihar, Rangpur and Mahasthan in North Bengal, and Jhewari (Chittagong) in East Bengal. The majority of them belongs to the ninth century, while some are earlier (e.g., Mahasthan) and others (Jhewari, Rangpur, Comilla and others in the museum at Rajshahi) of later date. The colossal copper Buddha from Sultanganj in Bihar (early fifth century) is followed in this group by large-sized figures of Buddha (Fig. 3) 5ft. high. Their considerable number, but recently brought to light, shows a widespread practice in Bihar and throughout Bengal that coincides with the prolific production of stone images of the Pala period.

Hitherto metal images from South India only have attracted attention, but now the Pala group from Eastern India presents itself. There is a difference though in the relation of stone and metal images in these two clearly tangible groups. The metal image of the south is the primary solution if held against the corresponding stone sculpture. It is altogether three-dimensional and fully modelled in the round. This is clearly to be seen in the treatment of side and back views; the former is provocative of being followed by the eye, forward as well as backward; the later in itself contains the dimension of depth; hip and shoulder belt, specially in the case of female figures, are preferably not on one level. Where they are, the waist is hollow, so that the fore-and-backward movement is doubly maintained. This dynamic mode of modelling in the round is adapted with difficulty only to the stone image treated as relief. The south Indian metal images being cast in the round, are more complete expressions of the creative urge of the Dravidian image-maker than the stone relief.

The Eastern-Indian group, however, in its main plastic conception does not differ from that of contemporary stone images i. e. stelae. For not only in some of the metal figures surrounded by a broad rimmed *prabhamandala* (Fig. 6, right) decorated as surface we see no moulding to give it three dimensional importance, but the large Buddha figure (fig. 3) is set against a flat *prabhamandala* of which the upper part, a solid shield, acts as a flat ground; (see also metal images from Rangpur).<sup>1</sup> The Balarama image (Fig. 7) on the other

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1. D. B. Spooner, Archaeological Survey of India, *Annual Report*, 1911-12, pp. 152-158, plates LXX and LXXI.

hand has for its setting an elaborate 'throne' in which the seven-fold cobra hood is the most solid figure. The plastic profusion of this setting inspite of its modelled parts, yet confines the main figures to the surface. This is binding all together and each figure separately as well. The female attendants stand on one line with the main figure. The latter is treated as a flat relief, but without background and the stiff and isolated *vanamala* does not add one single plastic accent more. The artistically inconsistent profusion of the whole is still more stressed by a restrained device, crude in its undisguised conspicuousness, unused in the composition of the whole. The two slanting wire-like supports between the frame of the throne and the legs of the image are a makeshift arrangement. It appears—I have not seen the image as yet—that these wires were added at a later period, probably at the time when the original inscription was tampered with. That they were necessary in order to support the stela, proves that the idea of creating a metal stela as like one carved in stone, minus the back ground, was not a successful attempt. The manner also in which the *sardula* on either side confronts the thin and beaded vertical fillet and how the latter with its sharp linear edge terminates the lower part of the sides of the stela, suggest that experiments were made in metal casting that were not prompted by the process itself nor by the conception of this image as made of metal, but by an endeavour to render in metal what had repeatedly and successfully been done in stone relief. The only feature in this image which is strictly metallic is the oblique cut of the scroll work of the plumage of the *hansas* that are perched on either side of the cross bar of the throne. This oblique cut well brings out the shine of the metal. From this technique it was transferred to wood carving, of which but few specimens from Bengal have been rescued but which has survived almost to this day in Nepal and in still more florid versions in Burma and Indo-China. Translated into stone this scroll work is shown to render plumage, the breath of the *kirtimukha* and foliage as well. Together with the intricacies of jewellery, also translated into stone, it offers a welcome animation of the surface and sets off the smoothness of the bodies of the various divinities. Whereas intricate treatment of jewellery did not find usual favour with the craftsman of Orissa, they employed more profusely the device of the obliquely cut scroll.

Bolder in conception although not superior in quality, is the image of the crowned Buddha (Fig. 5). The hard and generalised modelling of this image assigns to it a later date. The treatment is similar to that of a group of stone images. Its throne is rendered compactly a faithful replica of a conception in stone. The intervals on either side between figure and ground are also peculiar to stone image, although as a rule they do not occur in Buddha images. The few metallic features of this stela worth mentioning are the rendering of the leaves on the two branches of the Bodhi tree that appear as if growing from behind the stela, and the jewellery and 'flame' devices on the Buddha and on the edge of the throne, with their grooves into which white metal had been poured and is partly still there. Precious stones too may have had their place (cf. the Padmapani image with an emerald in the *jatamukuta*).

This is the case with gold-plated metal images from Nepal which had their precursors and prototypes, in this and many more respects, in the metal images of the Pala school.

Another attempt at a more fluid detail is made in the treatment of the hem of the standing Buddha (Fig. 6, right, see also Fig. 4) The lower hem of the *sanghati* is not to be found in the stone images. In a more stereotyped version, Fig. 3 shows this modification, which can be traced back to the colossal copper Buddha from Sultanganj.

The standing Buddha (Fig. 6, right) shows another interesting detail. The interval between his shoulders and the frame is joined by metal wires, to which in this case are applied flower rosettes and leaves, and the same device connects the *usnisa* and the top of the frame. The flowers to the either side of the Buddha are an invention, on the side of the craftsman, to disguise the connecting wires.

It is thus apparent that stylistically and compositionally the metal images from Kurkihar correspond to the stone images of the respective period from this and other sites. They range, as far as the illustrated examples are concerned, from the beginning to the end of the ninth century, (Figs. 6, right, and 7 early ninth century, Fig. 4 middle ninth century, and Figs. 3 and 5 end of ninth century). The stylistic changes need not be discussed here, as they have been dealt with by me in detail<sup>2</sup>.

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2. Kramrisch, Pala and Sena sculpture, *Rupam*, No. 40, pp. 14-15.

The iconographic feature alluded to in the text, i.e. the flame *usnisa* in Fig. 4 and some other images too, I am informed, is of considerable importance. The flame in the present example sallies forth ruggedly from an *usnisa* rather low and overgrown with the usual curls; they also cover the entire skull, which anticipates the pointed flame, itself ascending pointedly. A more geometrical arrangement of the flame-*usnisa* is to be seen on metal images of Buddha from Negapatam, South India, of about the same date (approximately the tenth century). The Buddha image with *bhūṣpārsa-mudra* from Tetrawan and the one from Khulna (South Bengal),<sup>3</sup> render one flame only that issues from the *usnisa* like a knot. Apart from the importance of this type for the Further-Indian and Ceylonese images of Buddha, its occurrence in India, in spite of the lateness of the preserved examples, throws light on the significance and origin of the *usnisa*. This problem will be dealt with by me separately.

The preliminary notes, based on a short visit and on six images only, already show part of the great gap which the Kurkihar find helps to fill in our knowledge of Indian art and iconography. It establishes the claim, already prepared by the number of metal images from other sites as well as by the reference of the Tibetan historian, Taranath, to a school of metal casting in the Pala empire. This straightly descends from the Gupta practice (e.g. image from Sultanganj), and future finds may light up its still remoter past, for the image from Sultanganj is technically most experienced and artistically very definitely formed.

The occurrence of a large number of images of one type produced in one centre, apart from its iconographical bearing and the associations with a place sacred by the activity of Buddha, reveals the organisation of the workshops that seems to go back to the beginning of image-making in India, but reached perfection—not to the advantage of artistic quality—by about the ninth century A. D. Standardisation of output, specialisation of one more or less narrowly circumscribed type are medieval features of Indian image-making. The custom and need of the pilgrims of tangibly carrying the memory of the sacred site with them may have given rise to the mechanisation of image-making, which was helped by the iconographic prescriptions.

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3. *Rupam*, No. 40, Fig. 43 and note.

Keepsakes of the main sacred sites must have been common in pre-iconic days ; this is witnessed by the recurring scenes of illumination, first sermon and *parinirvana* in Sanchi and elsewhere. Iconographic type and stylistic peculiarity came to be intimately associated with a given locality. In this way provincial or racial characteristics are raised above their ordinary significance.

The close connection between Nepalese gold-plated metal images and the present group is obvious. Equally clearly Pala prototypes of Javanese metal images may be seen in a number of metal images from Kurkihar, of which the small photograph (Fig. 6, right), however, does not allow more detailed discussion.

It need not be stressed here again that artistically there is no difference in the treatment of Buddhist, Jain and Brahmanical images produced in one centre at a given period. The difference is merely iconographical. The craftsmen, so whatever cult or sect they belonged, visualised an inner experience of what underlies the various forms of reaching out towards the Formless. In this they were guided by minute prescriptions. These they carried out to the best of their knowledge, for the minds that had framed those rigorous rules did it with a view of the same reality each craftsman carried within him. What he added, if at all, of his own, was subsidiary only iconographically and did not debar the image from being correct (Fig. 6, right), while creatively it went on though subduedly, to give the images that nourishment and strength they required, not in order to be fit for worship—but to maintain their position as works of art. This the images from Kurkihar do with all the qualities and reservations peculiar to Pala sculpture of the ninth century.

*Stella Kramrisch*

## ABBREVIATIONS

A. S. I.=Archæological Survey of India

A. S. R.=*Archæological Survey Reports.*

J. I. S. O. A.=*Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art.*

## ERRATA

Page 4, line 7 above foot-notes, *omit* 'conquest over Mara and.'

„ 8, foot-notes, line 5 above bottom, *for* 'Fig. 2' *read* 'Fig. 3.'

„ 13, line 6 above foot-notes, *for* 'Dbarmachakra' *read* 'Dharmachakra-pravartana.'

„ 14, line 11 above foot-notes, *omit* 'or Lokanatha.'

„ 16, line 14 from top, *omit* 'or Lokesvara.'

„ 25, lines 11 and 12 above bottom, *for* 'conquest over Mara.....him' *read* 'attainment of Buddha-hood.'

„ 36, last line, before 'female' *add* 'a'.

„ 40, line 5 above foot-notes, after 'between them' *add* '(Fig. 11)'.



# KURKI HAR, GAYA AND BODHGAYA

## 1. THE RUINS OF KURKI HAR

### The Ruins and their Identity

About three miles to the north-east of Wazirganj station on the South Bihar Railway, and sixteen miles to the north-east of Gaya town lies the large and ancient village of Kurki har. According to Sir Alexander Cunningham, the full name of the place is Kurak-vihar, a contracted vernacular form of Kukkutapada-vihar, or the Cock's-Foot monastery, *Kukkuta* of sanskrit being *Kurek* in Hindi.<sup>1</sup> The name is derived evidently from *Kukkutapada giri* or 'Cock's Foot Hill' described by both Fa-Hien and Hiuen Tsang, as also in several Buddhist treatises, as the scene of some of the miracles, as well as the final disappearance, of Kasyapa, the celebrated disciple of Buddha. On this account the hill was known also as *Gurupada-parvata* or 'the Hill of the venerable Teacher.' It is said, further, that it is on this hill that Maitreya, the future Buddha, is to make his appearance and take over the charge of the religion, along with the *cirara* or mantle of Buddha, which the latter entrusted to Kasyapa.<sup>2</sup>

Hiuen Tsang describes Kukkutapada-giri as "a three-fold cliff which projects in isolated loftiness, reaching to the sky and blending with the clouds." It was identified, somewhat hesitatingly, by Cunningham with the group of "three large and rugged hills which rise boldly out of the plain about half a mile to the north of the village and touch each other at their bases." On the highest peak of this hill Cunningham found a square basement "surrounded by quantities of broken bricks," which he believed to be the remnants of the stupa which king Ajatasatru is said to have built on the holy site.<sup>3</sup> Sir Aurel Stein who explored the site in 1899 controverts Cunningham's view, and identifies Kukkutapada-giri with Sobhnath hill, which is some six

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1. Cunningham, *Archæological Survey Reports*, Vol. I, pp. 15-16.

2. Cunningham *A. S. R.*, Vol. XV, p. 5, and Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, p. 14.

3. Cunningham, *A. S. R.*, Vol. XV, p. 5.

miles south-west of Kurkihar, and "with its three spurs resembles a cock's foot, and bears on its top an ancient mound."<sup>4</sup> Whichever of the two hills be the *giri* connected with the great Kasyapa and the expected Maitreya, Kurkihar was sufficiently close to either for a flourishing Buddhist establishment to have grown up at it and taken the name of Kukkutapada-vihara. The very name of the village, the extent of its ruins, and the antiquities with which it abounds, amply testify to this.<sup>4a</sup>

### Past Explorations

The first person to explore Kurkihar in modern times was Major Kittoe who visited it first in 1846 when he found "innumerable idols, chiefly Buddhas some of great size and very beautifully executed and well worth removing to the Museum and sending home." He saw also "rows after rows of chaityas extending north and south for several hundred feet and isolated buildings and tanks in every direction for a mile or more around". He was at the site again in 1848, when he spent four days and collected "ten cart-loads of idols all Buddhist and many of the Tantrika period". Some of these came to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and being eventually transferred to the Indian Museum at Calcutta form its Kurkihar Section.<sup>5</sup>

Cunningham visited Kurkihar once in 1861 and again in 1879. He describes the ruins as consisting of several mounds and a small rude Hindu temple of brick to the north of the village, evidently, the present Devasthan "in and about which a large number of statues have been collected." He says further, "In the principal mass of ruin, that is, the main mound, south of the busti the late Major Kittoe dug up a great number of statues and votive topes, and a recent excavation on the west side showed the solid brickwork of a Buddhist stupa. In the north-west corner of this excavation the relic chamber had been

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4. Stein, A tour in South Bihar and Hizaribagh, *Indian Antiquary*, 1901, pp. 84-89.

4 (a) Mr. Jayaswal reads *Apanakṛ Mahavihara* on one of the Kurkihar bronzes and takes this as the original name of at least one of the Kurkihar monasteries (*Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Vol. II, p. 72).

5. Anderson, *Catalogue and Handbook of the Archaeological collection in the Indian Museum*, Part II, p. 70.

reached, and I was privately informed that a small figure and some other remains had been discovered inside.' He noticed a "less extensive mound", south-west of the village, and a "small mound" only 120 ft. square to the north, "called *Sugitghar*, or the "house of *Sugata*" one of the wellknown titles of Buddha."<sup>6</sup>

In 1866 Mr. W. Peppe visited Kurkihar when he noticed a great number of figures including the squatted figure of ascetic Buddha under the holy tree with the representations of the events of his life on the back slab, noticed by Cunningham, as also the group of figures outside the little temple to the north of the village.<sup>7</sup>

Kurkihar was visited next in 1899 by Mr (now Sir Aurel) Stein mainly with a view to verify Cunningham's identification of Kukuta-pada-giri. Though he rejected the identification, as already noted, he was struck by the considerable importance of the place in old days, 'judging from the extent of its ruined mounds and the remarkable amount of old sculpture, carved building stones and ancient bricks, which have been and are still being extracted from them.' He noted in detail on three or four interesting sculptures which he saw in the village, and commented on the neglect and ignoble use to which several remarkable sculptures were put to, such as, richly carved slabs walled into mud houses, and votive stupas converted into 'washerman's stones'.<sup>8</sup>

### Three Collections of Kurkihar Antiquities

Some of the stone sculptures unearthed escaped such fate, and are to be found now mainly in three places, namely, the Zamindar's bungalow and the Devasthan temple in the village, and the Indian Museum at Calcutta. Nothing, however, has been done to stop the depredation on the mounds and preserve the ruins, and Kurkihar remained in obscurity until about the end of the year 1930, when the discovery of a hoard of bronze relics brought it again to the notice of scholars.

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6. Cunningham, *A. S. R.*, Vol. I, pp. 14-15 and plates XII and XIII.

7. Peppe, Rough notes on the Antiquities of Gaya District, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1866, p. 59.

8. Stein, A Tour in South Bihar and Hazaribagh, *Indian Antiquary*, 1901, pp. 84-86.

## II. OUR VISIT TO KURKI HAR.

### A recent discovery and our Visit.

The news of the discovery kindled in us a strong desire to visit the spot, and encouraged by Mr. Bijaynath Sarkar, C. E. (a member of our Varendra Research Society, and sometime its Honorary Secretary) who had seen the relics himself, we paid a visit to Kurkihar, and Gaya and Bodh-Gaya as well, during the Christmas week of 1931. At Gaya we saw Rai Hariprasad, the zamindar of Kurkihar, who was good enough to give us some facilities. Our visit had to be cut short, and we have drawn up this meagre account of the remarkable find and the ruins of Kurkihar in the hope of arousing the interest of scholars in the relics and bringing about a systematic exploration of the rich site.

### The south-west Mound.

Proceeding from Wazirganj railway station we entered Kurkihar from the south-west, and met a low mound strewn over with bricks—"the less extensive mound" of Cunningham. There is a tank to its east, the southern portion of which is somewhat encroached upon by a public road. Stein also noticed this mound though the "votive stupas of varying sizes" which he saw in abundance on the edge of the tank as well as other places have vanished since his visit. In the centre of the mound, however, there is still a fairly large statue of Buddha seated in *bhū-sṡarsa* pose under the holy tree, symbolizing his conquest over Mara and attainment of enlightenment. On the 'halo' of the image the Buddhist creed<sup>9</sup> is inscribed in the mail-headed characters of the ninth century A. D.

### Ramji Mandir.

As we proceed further the ground gradually rises and numerous relics, such as, fragments of stone pillars, door frames, votive stupas etc. lie scattered about on both sides of the road. One of these, we

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9. ये धर्मा हेतु प्रसवा हेतु तेषां तथागतस्य वदन्तां च यो निरीषः एवमादि महाश्रमनः ।  
 "Of all the functions which spring from a cause, the Buddha has revealed the cause, as also their cessation—thus said the great Sage."

noticed, bears an inscription in ninth century characters, but as the whole of it except a letter or two was under ground the inscription could not be read. A little further brought us to the south-east corner of the main mound of Kurkihar where stands the modern temple of Ramji, built by the zamindar of the village. To the east of the temple we saw two stone images built into a wall. The images are exactly alike and represent a standing and four-handed Avalokitesvara. The upper right hand holds an *aksamala*, the lower right is in *varada* pose, the upper left holds a *padma*, and the lower left a *kamandilu*. The face is finely executed, and seems pervaded with a divine grace. It is crowned with *jatamukuta*, with a few locks of hair falling down to the shoulders. We have no *sadhana* which corresponds exactly to these images, but one of the one hundred and eight varieties of Lokeshvara represented in painting with descriptive labels in the Macchandar Vahal at Kathmandu in Nepal does so<sup>10</sup>. From this agreement we identify the two images as Jatamukuta Lokeshvara. The images belong to the ninth century A. D. The Buddhist creed is inscribed in the 'halos' of both the sculptures, and one of them bears, in addition, an inscription on the pedestal, which, however, we could not read on account of its height from the ground.

### The main Mound.

This mound is about 600 ft. square and its top is some 25 ft. above the level of the surrounding paddy fields. Its surface is pitted with numberless holes, and strewn over with brickbats and fragments of stone sculptures pointing to the depredations for building materials to which it has been subjected for yerrrs. It has proved, however, as already noted, a veritable mine of antiquities. But all its previous yeilds have been thrown into shade by the splendid hoard of bronze images discovered in 1930. As usual, the discovery was due to digging for bricks. The spot as shown to us is at the junction of two walls: one running east and west, and the other jutting out of it towards the south, the latter being almost denuded of bricks. The spot where the relics were hoarded is some 25 ft. below the top of the mound and was probably enclosed by a circular wall, of which traces are visible (Fig. 1). The bricks found in this mound are of an unusually large size,  $16\frac{3}{4}" \times 10\frac{1}{2}" \times 2\frac{1}{2}"$ , which is also the size of the bricks of the Gupta

period found at Sravasti.<sup>11</sup> The bronzes, which were the main object of our visit, are kept in a shed of the Zamindar's bungalow, and are described in the next chapter.

### The old Collection at the Zamindar's bungalow.

This bungalow is close to the mound. Several of the sculptures seen there and described by Stein have been removed since to the Indian Museum. What is left now consists of a number of stone pillars, votive stupas and images of Buddha and Avalokitesvara, including a huge figure of Buddha seated in *bhu-sparsa* pose. This last image bears, in addition to the usual Buddhist creed, a votive inscription reading *deya dharmmoyam* × × *uṇṣa ka sṭhavira* × × in characters of the ninth century.

### The Temple and Collection at Devasthan.

We visited this Hindu temple which stands to the north of the village and contains a number of stone sculptures, mostly Buddhistic. We devote a separate chapter to this temple and its collection.

### Sugatghar Mound.

This mound, which lies, according to Cunningham's map, some 300 yards north of the Devasthan was not visited by us. We have found, however, a valuable clue to its identification in a stone architrave bearing three lines of inscription, which was collected by Cunningham at Kurkihar. It is not known from which of the mounds the stone came, and though the stone itself is lost, the eye-copy of the inscription left by the great archæologist indicates that it must have come from the Sugatghar mound, which, therefore, may be taken as the remains of the *Sugata-gandhakuti* temple built by a devotee from Kerala in Dakshinadesa, as recorded in the inscription<sup>12</sup>.

11. Archaeological Survey of India, *Annual Report*, 1910-11, p. 23.

12. Cunningham, *A. S. R.*, Vol. I, p. 15 and plate VIII, no. 7. The inscription reads: The Buddhist creed, *vide* footnote 9.

विजुल केरल दक्षिणदेशकः सुगतगन्धकुटीं शिलया क × तर सुकलसलहितिदयकारि श्रीमदभयचन्द्रमुनिः कुचपमवः।  
केरल दक्षिणदेशे विभुवनगुहविलसभयचन्द्राख्यः भक्त्या कारयदनि संशिलामय सर्वसलहितदेवैः।

### III. THE NEW-FOUND BRONZES OF KURKIHAR.

#### General Account.

We found the bronzes arranged in rows on three long benches in a shed in the compound of the Zamindar's bungalow.<sup>13</sup> Even so, they presented an imposing sight. So far as we could gather from our cursory inspection, they number about 218 in all: some 87 images, ranging in height from about 4 feet to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches, one crystal votive stupa  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter and 3 inches high and the rest odd pieces of bronze, such as, detached *chalis* or backplates of images, pedestals, votive stupas, bells, chhatras etc. Of the images 81 appear to be Buddhistic, and only 6 Brahmanical.<sup>13a</sup>

This splendid collection was found all in one spot, the miniatures packed in two earthen pots, which also are on view. The bronze images discovered at Jhewri in Chittagong District were found similarly collected at one spot.<sup>14</sup> It would be an interesting research to find how these relics came to be so hoarded.<sup>14a</sup>

Most of the relics are encrusted with verdigris and have to be cleaned by experts before we can know the details on them or the inscriptions which some of them are sure to bear.<sup>14b</sup> One point that struck us was that the *chalis* inscribed with the Buddhist creed attached to some of the images appear to have been struck or cast from standard moulds separately from the images.

13. The relics have since been taken possession of by Government and removed to the Patna Museum.

13 (a) Altogether 230 pieces have reached the Patna Museum. Of these, 150 are images of deities, 105 bear inscriptions, and only three are plated with gold (*J. I. S. O. A.*, Vol. II, p. 76) A part of the find appears to be left at Kurkihar.

14. Archaeological Survey of India, *Annual Report*, 1927-28, p. 184, The bronzes discovered at Negapatam in South India were found similarly hoarded, *A. S. I. Annual Report*, 1927-28, p. 159.

14 (a) Regarding the Kurkihar hoard, Mr. Jayaswal advances the usual theory that the images were concealed by the monks when the Muslim army was advancing in 1197 A. D., and could not be restored afterwards (*J. I. S. O. A.*, Vol. II, p. 71) The real explanation may be that there were bronze foundries in the monasteries of those days. Other evidence in this direction has been found at Paharpur in North Bengal.

14 (b) The bronzes have been cleaned since in the Patna Museum with the result given in note 13 (a)

Some of the images appear to be gold-plated and some which are decorated have sockets in the ornaments and crowns which were once set with jewels. In fact, a fine gold-plated image of Padmapani (which we saw in Rai Hariprasad's house at Gaya) still bears an emerald in its crown. In some of the images the eyes, tilakas and some ornaments are inlaid with silver.<sup>14</sup>

### Bronze Casting and Gilding,

Before proceeding to describe the images or discuss their iconography we may touch on one or two interesting points about them. The most striking fact is that these images bear an eloquent testimony to the high level to which the arts of casting and gilding bronze images rose in ancient Magadha.<sup>15</sup> The larger figures resemble the Sultanganj or rather the Mahasthan bronze image (Fig. 2) and belong probably to the same school of manufacture.<sup>15a</sup> We have no ancient texts bearing on the processes of those days, but the processes appear to have been the same as are in vogue now-a-days in Nepal, as suggested by Mr. Nanigopal Majumdar in connection with the Mahasthan image.<sup>16</sup>

14 (c) Alloyed with tin (*J. I. S. O. A.*, Vol II, pp. 73 and 76)

15. According to the *Rajatarangini*, IV, verses 259 and 262, a coveted object taken away from Magadha by Lalitaditya of Kashmir (early 8th century A. D.) was a *pingala-kanti* or gilt bronze image of Buddha.

15 (i) According to *J. I. S. O. A.*, Vol. II, the earliest of the Kurkihar bronzes is the gilt Buddha (p. 71 and pl. XXIX (1) of the *Journal* or the right hand image of our Fig. 6) which is ascribed to the Gupta age or fifth century A.D. like the Sultanganj image. Next comes the standing Buddha (p. 73 and pl. XXXI of *Journal* or the right hand image of our Fig. 3). Next to it in age is the inscribed Bodhisatva Vajrasvara dedicated by Maleka of Bali island (*circa* 780 A. D., p. 71 and pl. XXVIII (1) of *Journal*). Then come the images of the Pala age, viz., Balarama of year 9 of Devapala (*circa* 825 A. D., p. 71 and pl. XXVIII (1) of *Journal* or our Fig. 7), the Naga pedestal (p. 72 and pl. XXXIV (1) of *Journal*), the Vasudhara images of year 32 of Rajyapala (*circa* 930 A. D., p. 72 and pl. XXXII (1) and (2) of *Journal*; the words, *Apankai Mahavhara* are inscribed on the latter image) the Cunda image of year 31 of Mahipala (*circa* 1009 A. D., p. 72 and pl. XXXIV (1) of *Journal*) and last, the crowned Buddhas of years 3 and 19 of Vighrahapala III (*circa* 1050 A.D. pp. 72 and 75, and pl. XXXIII (1) of *Journal* or the central image of our Fig. 2, and p. 72 and Pl. XXXIV (3) of *Journal* respectively).

16. Majumdar, A gold-plated bronze from Mahasthan, *Modern Review*, 1926, October, p. 427. Regarding the bronze Buddha of *circa* fifth century A.D. from Sultanganj, which is 7'-6" high and weighs nearly one ton, Dr. Coomaraswamy notes:



The casting was done by what is known as the *cire perdue*, or wax melting process, in which a model of the object is made in wax. For the larger images the wax is laid as a thin layer over a core of black substance (probably graphite mixed with fire-clay) as found in the Mahasthan image, while for still larger ones, such as the Sultan-ganj image, the casting is done in more than one layer. Over the model of wax are applied two or three coats of fine clay mixed with cow-dung. The mould is then dried in the open air and under shade, and a few more coats of fine clay and rice husk are applied. When the mould is quite dry it is heated in a fire, then the wax melts and runs out through a hole left for the purpose in the mould. Molten metal<sup>16a</sup> is then poured in its place in the mould. When it is quite cool the clay casing is broken off and the casting finished with a chisel.

For gilding a bronze image the Newar artisans of Nepal apply over its clean smooth surface first a certain preparation of mercury and then a quasi-liquid amalgam, the chief ingredients of which are gold dust and mercury. When the image is heated the mercury evaporates, leaving an even deposit of gold on the bronze surface.

### 'Crowned' Images of Buddha

Another striking fact is that out of the fifty-one images of Buddha in the find, as many as thirty, viz., nineteen 'standing' and eleven 'seated', are crowned images. The occurrence of crowned images of Buddha—the apparent anomaly of depicting a monk in a royal garb—has been a puzzle to scholars. Some scholars have put down such images as 'uncanonical' and some as an 'unorthodox form' while one, Rai Bahadur Ramaprasad Chanda, thinks that 'this group of crowned figures evidently represent a new type of Buddha that originated in Eastern India in the Pala period.' On the other hand,

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"The figure is cast in two layers, the inner of which was moulded on an earthy, cinder-like core, composed of a mixture of sand, clay, charcoal and rice husks. The segments of this inner layer were held together by much corroded iron bands, originally three quarters of an inch thick. The outer layer of copper seems to have been cast over the inner one presumably by the *cire perdue* process; it was made in several sections, one of which consisted of the face and connected parts down to the breast. *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 240, also V. Smith, *History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon*, p. 172.

16 (a) The percentages of metals in the Kurkihar bronze are 83 of copper, 13 of tin, 1.4 of lead and 1 of iron (*J.I.S.O.A.* Vol. II, page 71)

M. Coedes and later Mr. Nanigopal Majumdar advance the opinion that these crowned images represent Adi Buddha, the primordial Buddha, from whom after many births as Bodhisattva came the latest or Gautama Buddha.<sup>17</sup> The basis of Mr. Majumdar's opinion seems to be the statement of Miss Alice Getty that in Nepal "the Adi Buddha is always represented as a crowned Buddha, that is to say that although he is a Buddha he wears the five-leafed crown as well as other traditional ornaments of a Dhyani Bodhisattva and is dressed in princely garments."<sup>18</sup> Whatever currency the cult of Adi Buddha might have had in Nepal and Tibet there is little evidence in either the tradition or the literature of Magadha and Bengal of its having found any foot-hold in the latter tracts. The correct explanation of the occurrence of these crowned images of Buddha in such numbers appears to be that offered by M. Paul Mus,<sup>19</sup> namely, a desire to imitate in stone or bronze the larger statues of Buddha of the monastic type, but adorned for ritual purposes with real jewels.<sup>19a</sup>

### New-found Buddhist Images

Of the Buddhist images, 26 represent the standing Buddha, 25 the seated Buddha, 3 Kurukulla, 2 grouped figures and the rest Tara and Avalokitesvara.

### The standing Buddhas.

All the 26 standing Buddhas including the 19 crowned ones and in whatever composition found, have the attitude of the Buddha

17. Majumdar, "Adi Buddha in the Eastern School of Art", Varendra Research Society's *Monographs*, No. 3.

18. Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, p. 3.

19. In his article "Le Buddha pare : son origine indienne," *B. E. F. E. O.* XXVIII, 1928, vide Dr. Coomaraswamy's review (1930.) The doctor adds, "For such ceremonial decoration of a monastic cult image the most definite evidence is afforded by Hsuan Tsang, in connection with the image at Bodhgaya, the ornaments mentioned being precisely the diadem and breast ornaments which are characteristic of crowned Buddhas."

19 (a) The inscribed crowned Buddhas discovered at Kurkihar belong to Vignarhapala III's time or the eleventh century A. D. (see footnote 15 (a) above.) Mr. Jayaswal suggests, without advancing any reason, that this deviation from the Buddhist canons was made with a view to accord with the Hindu recognition of Buddha as an avatara of Visnu, and to draw the Hindus to the Buddhist fold (*J.I.S.O.A.*, Vol. II, p 75).

images of the Gupta period, i.e., the right hand held in the *abhaya* pose, and the left hand holding the hem of the *sanghati* which covers the body from the neck to the ankles and the wrists. Five of these images are large, nearly half life-size, like the Mahasthan image. They stand respectively 3'10", 3', 3', 3' and 2'8" in height over pedestals of 'double lotus', which again are respectively 1'2", 10", 10", 7" and 11" in height.

### A 'crowned' standing Buddha.

The third image mentioned above (central image of Fig. 3)<sup>19b</sup> is a crowned specimen and is highly ornamented. The attitude and drapery are in the style of the images of the Gupta period, as already noted. The Lord stands erect on a double lotus, the right hand showing the *abhaya* pose, the left holding gracefully the frill of the *sanghati* which reaches down to the ankles. He wears an elaborate necklace and a highly ornamented crown, originally inlaid with jewels as the empty sockets now indicate. The face portrays beautifully the calmness of a yogi, 'the eyes concentrated on the tip of the nose' signifying deep meditation. A circular *urna* adorns the forehead greatly enhancing the beauty of the full round face. The rectangular *chali* is rounded at the top and edged with flames and bears a *kinnara* and a *kinnari* on either side.

### Buddha's Descent from the Trayastrimsa Heaven

The fourth image noted above (Fig. 4) depicts this legend. We learn from Buddhist literature that Buddha after his enlightenment, went to the Trayastrimsa, or thirty-third, heaven to preach the truth to his mother who was residing there after her death. After fulfilling this mission he descended to the earth at Sankasya, attended by Brahma and Indra, the former fanning the Lord with a fly-whisk, and the latter holding an umbrella over him. In the present image, we find Buddha standing erect on a double lotus wearing a *sanghati* which covers the whole body from the neck to the ankles. His right hand bears a small 'lotus' mark on the palm (*padmankita-kara-charanah*, as laid down in the *V'rihat-samhita*, ch. 57) and is held in the *varada* pose, while the left with the palm inwards holds the hem of the *sanghati*, the folds of which are shown by graceful curves all over the body. The

19 (b) Same as pl. XXXIII (1) of *J. I. S. O. A.*, Vol. II. The image bears the date, year 3 of Vigrahapala, circa 1050 A. D.

neck is marked by *trivali*. The full and round face has thick lips (the lower one thicker than the upper, as in the Gupta period), a straight and pointed nose, arched eyebrows over eyes fixed downwards, elongated ears (agreeing with the canon, *santatma-lambakarnascha* of the *Agni Purana*, ch. 49) and a circular *urna* on the forehead. The curls are surmounted by the usual *usnis*, which again is topped by what looks like a three-tongued flame. This novel feature occurs in one other Buddha figure in the present find, and in several of the bronzes discovered at Negapatam in the Madras Presidency in 1927-28.

To the right of Buddha stands a three-faced pot-bellied attendant bearing *jalamukula* and three eyes in the central face. His right hand holds a fly-whisk while the left hanging down holds a *kamandalu*. This is evidently Brahma who accompanied the Lord in his great descent. To the left is another male attendant, with one head but three eyes, and highly ornamented and elaborately crowned. This is Indra, but instead of holding an umbrella over the head of the Lord, he holds, on the palms crossed in front, a cup with a lid, evidently some sort of offering. There is, however, no reason to doubt the identity of this specimen with the scene of Buddha's descent though it does not fully conform to the legend, for there is an almost similar representation of the scene in a stone sculpture from Kurkihar now in the Indian Museum<sup>20</sup>: In that sculpture Brahma, known by his three heads, holds the umbrella, while Indra standing to the left holds in his two hands a cup of offerings. Steps of the ladder by which the three gods are coming down are engraved below, and there can be no doubt that the sculpture represents the scene of Buddha's descent though it does not fully conform to the literature.

The fact is that though they were held in check by rules and tradition, the artists in the olden days had plenty of latitude for the play of their creative faculties. Otherwise, we should not find so much variety in the representation of the same deity or the same scene.

### Seated Buddha Images.

The seated Buddha figures number 25, including 11 crowned ones. All of them, except two, are in the *bhu-sparsa* pose, signifying

20. Anderson, *Catalogue and Handbook of the Archaeological Collection in the Indian Museum*, Part. II, p. 76, Kr. 6.

Buddha's conquest over Mara and final enlightenment, an event which happened at Bodh Gaya. Obviously the close proximity of Kurkihar to Bodh-Gaya is the reason for the prolific representation of this scene. In fact, this is the prevailing type of Buddha image in this locality. Thus, the Buddha image on the south-west mound, that in the Zamin-dar's bangalow, and most of those at the Devasthan temple of Kurkihar, and the huge Buddha image at the Kowadol hill, all are in the *bhū-sparsa* pose<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, in and about Sarnath where Buddha preached his first sermon, it is that scene, symbolically called *Dharmachakra-pravartana* or "the turning of the wheel of Law", which forms the prevailing type. At Kurkihar we have only two of this type in the new find, and only one or two at the Devasthan.

### A 'crowned' seated Buddha.

This is a miniature measuring nearly 9 inches in height (Fig. 5).<sup>21a</sup> Buddha is represented as seated in the *bhū-sparsa* pose under a 'trefoil' arch resting on two pillars. The arch has a flame-like edging and is surmounted by an umbrella and a foliage. Buddha wears an elaborate necklace, a *kundala* and a highly ornamented crown. These appear to have been originally inlaid with silver as traces of it are still left in some of the sockets. The face is almost rectangular with a broad chin marked by the usual calm and meditative aspect. The *tri-ratha* pedestal is flanked by two lions. The back is inscribed with the usual Buddhist creed in four lines, and two other lines record the name of the donor *deya-dharmmoyam Kan-chana-deva, Varmmanah*.

### 'Dharmachakra' type of Buddhas

There are only two images of this type in the new find, as already noted. In each Buddha is represented as seated cross-legged with both hands raised to his breast, the left with the palm inwards representing *jñāna* or wisdom, and the right with the palm outwards and the thumb and forefinger touching each other representing

21. It is an interesting fact that this is the prevailing type also in Nepal and Sikkim even to the present day.

21 (a) Compare pl. XXXIX (2) of *Journal*, That image is inscribed in characters of the ninth century A. D. (*Ibid*, p. 74)

*vyakhyana* or 'exposition of the truth.' This pose of the *two* hands together is known as the *dharma-chakra* pose. On the pedestal is the figure of the 'wheel of law' with a deer on either side, representing the deer-park of Sarnath.

### Mahayana Images

Of the Mahayana pantheon, Avalokitesvara and Tara are the deities most numerous represented, there being a dozen images of each in the new find. There are also a few images of Kurukulla, and two unknown groups.

### Avalokitesvara

This deity figures widely and in numerous varieties in the sculpture and painting as well as the literature of medieval Buddhism, *Sudhanas* for fifteen varieties, based on the *Sudhanamula*, the *Aviseka-vidhi* and the *Dharmasoka-sangraha* of Amritananda, and pictures and descriptions for one hundred and eight varieties, based on those in the Macchandar Vahal at Katmandu are given by Dr. Binaytosh Bhattacharyya.<sup>22</sup> They fall, however, into three broad classes according as they have one, or two, or three pairs of hands. The new-found bronzes, in some of which Avalokitesvara is represented as standing and in others as seated, are either two-handed or four-handed. The six-handed type occurs at the Devasthan, and near Gaya.

### Two-handed Avalokitesvara or Lokanatha

This type generally shows, whether 'standing' or 'seated' the *varada* pose in the right hand and a lotus stalk in the left. The characteristic coiffure is the *jata-mukuta* with the figure of Dhyani Buddha Amitabha, the spiritual father of Avalokitesvara, seated in it. This type is called *Lokanatha*.

There is, however, one image of two-handed Avatokitesvara found at Kurkihar long ago, which presents some puzzling deviations from the usual type. It is a relievo 3 ft. wide and 3ft. 6 in. high, which was seen by Stein in 1899 in the Zamindar's bungalow at Kurkihar and is now in the Indian Museum<sup>23</sup>. It represents a god

22. Bhattacharyya, *Buddhist Iconography*, Ap. B.

23. *Indian Antiquary*, 1901, pp. 85-86 and plate facing p. 85, Bloch, *Supplementary Catalogue, Indian Museum* p. 56, No. 5859; also *Rupam* No. 40, and French, *Pala Art*, Plate XXIII (2)

seated in *lalitasana* within a trefoil niche. The two hands are held against the breast, the left with the palm inwards, and the right with the palm outwards. A lotus is seen just above the left shoulder, its stalk wound round the left arm. The god is decked with *nupura*, *valaya*, *keyura*, *hara*, and *kundala* and wears the *jatamukuta*, which bears the effigy of Dhyani Buddha Amitabha on it. The seated god is flanked by a standing female attendant on either side; that to the right has two hands, the right in the *abhaya* pose, and the left holds a lotus; the attendant to the left has four hands, the two normal hands joined in *anjali*, and of the remaining two one is in *varada* pose and the other holds a *kamandalu*. Along the curved top of the *choli* are seen the effigies of the five Dhyani Buddhas, each in a separate niche with Vairochana, the Dhyani Buddha of the "inner region," in the centre. Just below the lotus seat we find the Buddhist creed inscribed in characters of the ninth or tenth century A. D.

That the image is one of Avalokitesvara is clear enough. The flanking figures which are no other than Tara and Bhriku'i, the usual attendants of Avalokitesvara: the effigy of the Dhyani Buddha Amitabha, his spiritual father on the *jatamukuta*, his characteristic coiffure: all point to this identification. But, what variety of Avalokitesvara does it represent? None of the one hundred and twenty-three varieties mentioned before fully conforms to this specimen. The hands are in *dharmachakra* pose,—a characteristic of only two varieties of Lokeshvara, viz., Sukhavati Lokeshvara and Santasi Lokeshvara<sup>24</sup>. Both these are six-handed, exhibiting the *dharmachakra* pose in the normal pair of hands. The absence of the additional hands and certain other differences preclude us from identifying the image under consideration with either of the two. Moreover, it is to be remembered that this deity represents the emanation, not of one particular Dhyani Buddha, Amitabha, but of all the five Dhyani Buddhas combined. Now, the only form of Lokeshvara regarded as the offspring of the five Dhyani Buddhas is Vajradharma Lokeshvara whose cognizances, according to his *sadhana*<sup>25</sup>, are :

24. Bhattacharyya, *Buddhist Iconography*, p. 50 (*sadhana* 14) and p. 181 (No. 32.)

25. Bhattacharyya, *Buddhist Iconography*, p. 51 No. 15 or *Sadhanamala* (Gaekwad's Oriental Series) Vol. I. p. 33 *sadhana* No. 20 :

तं धितं रत्नवर्णे नु पद्मरागसमयुतिं ।

पद्मवज्रमुक्तधरं हृषीकेशोत्पललोचनम् ॥

(1) that he should bear the effigies of the five Dhyani Buddhas on the crown, (2) that he should hold in the left hand a lotus with sixteen petals, to open it with the right hand held against the breast, (3) that he should ride a peacock, and (4) that he should reside in the sanctum inside a *chaitya*.

The image in question corresponds to this description in some respects. The effigies of the five Dhyani Buddhas are on the top. The god sits within a trefoil niche which may stand for the *chaityantastha kutagara*. The effigy of a bird engraved on the right pillar of the trefoil niche may be taken as the vehicle, *mynra*. The pose of the hands, however, is nothing but the *dharmachakra mudra*, and can by no stretch of the imagination be taken as one of 'unfolding a lotus'. Hence the identity of the image must remain an open question.

### Four-handed Avalokitesvara or Lokesvara

This type, whether 'standing' or 'seated', generally shows, the *varada* pose and an *akshamala* in the right, a *kamrunda*, and a *padma* in the left hands, with a *puthi* or book resting on the *padma* in some cases. The characteristic coiffure is the *jatamukuta* with Amitabha sitting in it. This type is known as Jatamukuta Lokesvara, as already noted in the case of the two images near Ramji-mandir.

A fine image of this variety occurs also among the newfound bronzes (central image, Fig. 6)<sup>25a</sup>. In it Avalokitesvara is seen standing in a slight *tribhanga* pose and exhibiting in his four hands, respectively the *varada* pose, an *akshamala*, the stalk of a lotus which rises to his shoulder, and a *puthi*. A *ghata* is placed on the leaf of a lotus, the stalk of which emerges from the pedestal along with that of the lotus in the deity's hand. The effigy of Amitabha, his spiritual father is engraved on the *jatamukuta*. Though somewhat disfigured at present by a deposit of verdigris, the face has an expression of benign dignity which marks out the image as one of the finest examples of Pala art.

वामतोऽस्यार्द्धायानां धृत्वा षोडशपत्रकं ।

पद्मं विकाशयन्त्य हृदि दक्षिणपाणिना ॥

मधुरीपरि मध्यक्षे निषण्णं चन्द्रमण्डले ।

सुतपथ्यङ्गमाभुज्य सञ्जङ्गारवसोत्पथं ॥

देव्यान्तःस्थं महाकर्म कूटगारविहारिणं ।

भावयेत् वज्रधर्मोद्यं नित्यं बोधिं शवाप्नुयात् ॥

25(a). Same as pl. XXVIII(2) of *J. I. S. O. A.*, Vol. II.



### Tara Images

There are about a dozen images of Tara, some 'standing' and some 'seated', among the new-found bronzes. They are all of the Khadiravani type, showing the *varada* pose in the right hand and holding an *utpala* or water-lily in the left. According to her *sadhana* this variety of Tara is of *harit* or green colour, and is called *shyama* Tara.

### Tantrik Goddess Kurukulla

Another noteworthy image in the new find, of which, we regret, we are unable to give an illustration here, is the rarely represented Buddhist goddess Kurukulla, a female emanation of Dhyani Buddha Amitabha, the recital of whose mantra, *Om Kurukulle hrīh anukam me vasam-anaya hoh sūha*, is said to confer success in the tantrik rite of *vasikarana* or subjugation of men, women, Asuras and even the gods<sup>26</sup>. There are four varieties of this deity according as she has one, two, three or four pairs of arms. In the Kurkihar find we have three specimens of the six-armed variety, of which Dr. Bhattacharyya could discover none in 1924 when he published her *sadhana*<sup>27</sup>.

According to this *sadhana*, "one should conceive the goddess Kurukulla as having a red complexion, sitting in the *vajra-paryanka* attitude, on a 'sun seat' of red lotus of eight petals, exhibiting the *trailokya-vijaya* pose in the first pair of hands, an *ankusa* and a red lotus in the second pair, and an outstretched bow with the arrow drawn to the ear in the third, clad in red garments and bearing the effigies of the five Dhyani Buddhas on the crown."

The three new-found specimens of Kurkihar, which are miniatures ranging in height from 3 inches to 6 inches, correspond to this

26. *Sadhanamala*, Vol. II., p. 347, *sadhana* No. 172.

यस्याः स्वरूपमात्रेण सद्वैवासरसानुवाः प्रुदं किङ्करतां यान्ति तां नमस्यामि तारिणीम् ।

27. Bhattacharyya *Buddhist Iconography*, p. 55; for *sadhana* see p. 127 or *Sadhanamala* Vol. II. p. 351, No. 173:

कुरुकुला भगवती पश्येत् रक्तां रक्ताट्टलपद्मस्थामने वज्रपद्मद्विषयां वज्रभुजां सन्धाधपद्म प्रथम-  
भुजाभ्यां वै लोकावितिगमुद्राधरां द्वितीयदक्षिणामङ्गार्यां अङ्गुशरकोत्पलधरां परिश्रितमुजद्वयेनाकर्णपुरित-  
धनुःशरान् रक्ताम्बरधरां पञ्चतथागतमुकुटीं .....

*sadhana*, except that the effigies of the five Dhyani Buddhas are wanting, probably lost with the *chalis*. Each specimen represents the goddess as sitting cross-legged on a lotus with her first pair of hands crossed at the breast and turned outwards, holding respectively a *vajra* and a bell (indicative of the *trailokya-vijaya* pose), the second pair holding a goad and a lotus and the third pair charging the bow.

### Two remarkable Groups

There are several other miniature images among the new-found bronzes, some as small as  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " in height. A careful examination of these specimens, for which, unfortunately, we had no opportunity, is sure to throw light on many dark points of Buddhist iconography. Two specimens, however, we describe here, with a view to eliciting their identification. One miniature represents a group of four figures (two couples seated side by side on a pedestal), each of the female figures bearing a child in her lap. The other miniature represents one couple seated side by side, the female holding a child in her lap. Over-head is a figure seated cross-legged in the *śrīmadhi mudra*. On the pedestal are seen three seated figures and the back is inscribed with the usual Buddhist creed. These two bronzes resemble, in their composition, sculptures No. 327 and 329 in the Museum of the Varendra Research Society at Rajshahi town. Sculpture No. 329 represents a man and a woman, with a child in the lap of each, seated cross-legged in the *dhyana* pose. The pedestal bears five figures seated at ease in the middle, with a male and a female devotee kneeling down with folded hands on either side and a small inscription below. Sculpture No. 327 is very similar, the only difference being that there are four seated figures instead of five in the middle of the pedestal. This sculpture is larger than the other one and its top part is broken off. It has been suggested that these are Jaina images, but the fact of their close resemblance to this Kurkihar figure, inscribed with the Buddhist creed and hoarded with Buddhist images, goes against that view.

### New-found Brahmanical Images

So far as we could gather, there are only six Brahmanical images among the new-found bronzes, namely, three specimens of Siva-Parvati, one of Visnu, one of Balarama and one of Surya. The first and the last images are of the usual types.

### The Visnu Image

This image, of which we have no photograph, is a miniature 6 inches high. The deity is represented with all his four hands hanging down : the upper right hand holds a lotus, the upper left a *sukha*, the lower right hand holds a *gada*, one end of which rests on the pedestal, and the lower left hand holds a *chakra* supported by a rod from the pedestal. In style and execution this image may be compared with the stone sculptures No. 278, 504 and 843 in the Museum of the Varendra Research Society at Rajshahi, and ascribed to the early Pala period (ninth century A. D.). This date is confirmed by the script of an inscription on the pedestal which reads *Ma x x Karmakara*. A faulty inscription of a later age, reading *deva dharmmayam*, is recorded on the right side of the pedestal. It appears that at the time of manufacture the artisan engraved his own name on it. Later on somebody mistook this for the name of the donor, and added the faulty dedicatory formula. The obvious difference in age between the two inscriptions, the absence of the genitive suffix to the name, and the surname *Karmakara* or "a worker in metal", all point to the conclusion that the name recorded is the artisan's and not the donor's.

### The Balarama Image

This is the second bronze image of Balarama found in Magadha ; the first was unearthed at Nalanda in the year 1927-28.<sup>28</sup> The Kurkihar image is a fine one, 1 ft. 2 inches high (Fig. 7).<sup>29</sup>

Before dealing with this particular image we shall discuss the iconography of the deity. Balarama, Balabhadra or Rama is one of the ten incarnations of Visnu, but his worship as an independent deity is but rarely met with. Occasionally he is worshipped in company with his younger brother Krisna, whose greater glory has put him in the shade. A plough (*hala*, *langala* or *sira*) and a club (*musala*) are his two cognizances, from which he derives his many names, viz., Langalin, Haladhara, Halapani, Sirapani, Sirayudha, Sirabhrit, Sirin,

28. A. S. I., *Annual Report*, 1927-28, p. 132, foot-note.

28 (a) Same as pl. XXVIII (1) of *J. I. S. O. A.*, Vol. II. The image is dated year 9 of Devapala's reign (826 A. D.)

Musalayudha, Musalapani, Musalin etc. In his two-handed representations, he carries his two cognizances, *musala* and *hala*, in the right and left hands respectively, *daksina-hastena musala-dharam vama hastena haladharam*,<sup>29</sup> In the four-handed representations, *chakra* and *sankha*, both of which are attributes of Visnu, are to be added along with the additional arms,<sup>30</sup> though, as we shall see later, they are seldom found in actual practice in any of the early medieval images.

According to the iconographic texts, his complexion should be white, and his garments either red or blue : *rakta-vastradharam*, or *nila-vasana*<sup>31</sup>, and he should have the hair of his head tied up in a knot at the top, *udvaldhakuntalam*.<sup>32</sup> The Puranas describe Balarama as a hard drinker, and it is but in keeping with this character that the texts too lay down that he is to have his eyes 'rolling in intoxication' : *mada-vibhrama-lochanah*<sup>33</sup>, or *mado-dauchita-lochanah*,<sup>34</sup>. Another of his peculiarities is that he is to have the *kuudala* or ear-pendant in only one of his ears : *vibhratkuudalamekam*.<sup>35</sup>

In the new-found image, Balarama is represented as standing on a double lotus placed on a *triratha* pedestal, with a seven-hooded snake canopy over his head. This canopy marks him out as the incarnation of the mythical serpent, Ananta-naga : *Balebhadro-naula-murttil*,<sup>36</sup> and makes with *hala* and *musala*, the three main cognizances of the deity. The god wears *vanamala*, *yajnopavita* and the usual ornaments. He has four hands, with *hala* and *musala* in the upper left and right respectively. The lower right hand holds an elongated object, most probably some sweetmeat offered by the female attendant to his right, who holds a plate of sweetmeat in her left hand. The

29. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. II, pt. 2, Ap., p. 44.

30. *Agni-Purana*. ch. 49 :

वामीर्हं लाङ्गलं दद्यादधः शङ्खं सुशोभनम् ।

सुखलं दक्षिणीर्हेतु चक्रं चाधः सुशोभनम् ॥

31. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. II, pt. 2, Ap., p. 44.  
and *Visnu-dharmottara* III,

32. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. II, pt. 2, Ap., p. 44.

33. *Brihatsamhita*, ch. 57.

34. *Visnu-dharmottara*. III.

35. *Brihatsamhita* Ch. 57.

36. *Agni-Purana*, Ch. 15.

lower left hand, which is broken off, probably held a wine cup, as the female attendant on the left bears a wine flask and a cup in her hands.

Thus, this image does not conform to the prescription of the *Agni-Purana* as regards the provision of *sankha* and *chakra* in the two lower hands. In fact, none of the images of Balarama of the early medieval period that we know of, does so. The four-handed specimen at Osia has the two additional hands empty.<sup>37</sup> The four-handed image at Paharpur, as well as the one in the Varendra Research Society's Museum at Rajshahi, has the additional left hand in the *kati-hasta* pose, the corresponding right hand holding a wine cup.

Though neither in this nor in the other images of Balarama the eyes can be said to be 'rolling in intoxication', as prescribed by the texts, yet in each the wine-cup in the deity's hand and the presence of female attendants bearing wine flask and sweets, are clear enough indications of the habit of drinking which the Puranas attribute to him. It is in this character that the Kurkihar image represents him.

It may be added here that the Paharpur sculpture shows two more peculiarities of Balarama prescribed by the texts, but not seen in any other image of his, viz., the hair tied up in a knot and a single *kundala* worn, in this case in the right ear.

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37. A. S. I., *Annual Report*, 1908-09, p. 113. One of the temples at Dharmaranya, two miles east of Bodh-Gaya contains a fine large stone image of four-handed Balarama canopied by a seven-headed snake hood, with the two additional hands resting on the head of a *Chakrapurusa* and a *Gulanari* respectively. Its date, however, is not known.

## IV DEVISTHAN TEMPLE OF KURKIAR

### The Temple

In the north of the village stands the Hindu temple known as *Devasthan*, or the Goddess's shrine. It contains some 60 stone sculptures, mostly Buddhistic, set up inside the shrine and in the porch and the open courtyard outside. This interesting collection was visited by Cunningham and others, as already mentioned.

The present temple which has a pyramidal tower on a square base, is said to be a modern construction, but appears to have been built out of the remains of an older structure which evidently stood on the site. Fourteen ancient pillars, most of them of the early Pala period (ninth century A. D.), support the roof of the porch, and the stone frame of the entrance of the temple too belongs to the same age. The latter consists of three strips, each standing slightly out of the other. The outer strip is decorated with a deep and angularly cut scroll work representing the undulating stem of a creeper with large curled leaves. The middle strip consists of a pilaster with horizontal bands and foliage emerging out of a pot which rests on the head of a *Gana*, and with the top adorned with an *amalaka* with deeply cut ribs. The inmost strip depicts a *yaksi*, or Ganga-Yamuna figure standing within a niche under a roof composed of receding tiers ending in an *amalaka*. About the middle of the strip we have a *Kirtimukha* with festoons hanging down from its mouth, and above it, scroll work. The whole frame is a fine example of decorative sculpture and appears to have belonged to the temple which originally stood on this site.

### Baghesvari or Ganesa-janani

So far as Cunningham could gather, the temple is said to be dedicated to Baghesvari or the 'Goddess of the lion'. Her image (Fig.8), as pointed out to us, is fixed, however, in the west wall of the porch and not inside the sanctum. It represents a four-handed female seated in *lalitasana* on a lion, with her right leg hanging down and resting on a lotus. Her upper right hand is broken off, the lower right rests on her right knee in the *varada* pose, holding something indistinct. The upper left hand holds a *khetaka* or shield, and the lower left holds a child seated in her lap. She wears a *sari* reaching down to the ankles and fastened with an elaborate girdle, and has the usual ornaments on her person. The face, in spite of mutilation, has a benign expression.

According to Cunningham, the image represents either Indrani with the infant Jayanta, or Sasthi, the goddess of fecundity, a form of Durga<sup>38</sup>. It cannot be Indrani, whose recognised *vahana* is an elephant, and not a lion. The goddess Sasthi, said by the lexicographer Medini to be indetical with Katyayani, a form of Durga,<sup>39</sup> is but rarely represented. Her *dhyana* as practised now-a-days describes her as a two-handed goddess seated on a lotus with a child in her lap<sup>40</sup>. The *dhyana* mentions no *vahana*, but according to popular belief her *vahana* is a cat. The child in the lap is no sure indication that the image represents Sasthi, the goddess of fecundity, especially as the number of hands is four, and not two, the attribute in one of them a *khetaka*, and the *vahana* a lion. In fact, this *vahana* marks out the deity as some form of Durga, and we can supply the attribute of the missing upper right hand from a very similar image from Bihar which is now in the Indian Museum<sup>41</sup>, and in which the goddess carries *asi* or sword, and a *khetaka* in the upper right and left hands, while her lower right exhibits the *varada* pose and the lower left holds a child in her lap. It is certain, therefore, that the missing upper hand of the Kurkihar image too carried a sword. This, however, does not tell us what variety of Durga the image represents, as we find no *dhyana* which corresponds to it.

Now, in the *Kavacha* portion of the *Chandi*, Nava-Durgas or the nine forms of Durga are enumerated, Skandamata or Skanda's mother being one of them<sup>42</sup>. Among the one hundred and eight names of Durga given in the *Viscasra Tantra* we have the same name of Skandamata,<sup>43</sup> while among her hundred names in the *Mundamala*

38. Cunningham, *A. S. R.* Vol. I, p. 15.

39. *Sahitakalpadruma*, the word *Sasthi*

40. विभुजां हेमगौराङ्गीं रत्नखड्गधारभूषिताम् ।  
वरदाभङ्गहस्तां च शरच्चन्द्रनिभाननाम् ॥  
पटवस्त्रपरिधानां पीनोन्नतपयोधराम् ।  
अङ्गाद्विजयसुतां षष्ठीमम्बुजस्थाम् विचित्रयेत् ॥

41. Bloch, *Supplementary Catalogue, Indian Museum* p. 91, No. 3946.

42. प्रथमं शैलपुत्रीम्, द्वितीयं ब्रह्मचारिणीम् ।  
तृतीयं चित्रवर्णम्, चतुर्थं कुष्माण्डम् ।  
पञ्चमं स्कन्दमातेति, षष्ठं कात्यायनीम् तथा ।  
सप्तमं कालरात्रेति, महागौरीति चाष्टकम् ।  
नवमं सिद्धदात्रीं च दशमं प्रकीर्तताम् ॥

43. सर्वान्ते पार्वतीं च स्कन्दमातां विनिश्चयेत् ।

*Tantra*, one is Ganesa-janani,<sup>44</sup> Ganesa being her other child. Thus the conception of Durga as Skandamata or Ganesa-janani was a recognized one, and it is but appropriate that in her representation in this form there should be a child in her lap.

With this form of Durga, as Skandamata or Ganesh-janani, are to be identified also the inscribed image of year 3 of Madanapala's reign found on the Bihar hill by Mr. Broadley and called Sasthi, which is now in the Patna Museum,<sup>45</sup> and the inscribed bronze image of year 54 of Narayanapala's reign also discovered in Bihar town, and now in the Museum of the Bangiya Sahitya Parisad at Calcutta<sup>46</sup>. That the 'Baghesvari' image of Devasthan does indeed represent Ganesa-janani is testified to by the fact that in spite of mutilation, traces of Ganesa's proboscis and his rotund belly are still visible on the figure of the child in the image.

### The Principal Deity of the Devasthan Temple

The principal figure in the sanctum of the temple is (as was noted also by Cunningham) a life-size statue of the eight-armed Mahisamardini or Durga slaying the Mahisasura or Buffalo demon, with the usual weapons in her several hands. The image, however, is covered all over with a sari, and provided with a pair of silver eyes, as is usual with images under worship.

### A remarkable Buddhist Image

The above two images, and a Mukha-lingam (i. e. a lingam with a bust) and a Nava-graha (or nine planet) slab, are all that we could find of Hindu images in this temple. The remaining six or seven in the sanctum appear to be Buddhistic, the most remarkable of them being the image of an eighteen-armed female deity. We had no access to the image, and got only the following details of it from the *pujari*. It represents the goddess seated cross-legged on a double lotus with the usual *praharanas*, such as *sukla*, *chakra*, *gada*, *parasu*, etc. in her several hands. The upper part of the *chali* is gone, but an effigy of a Dhyani Buddha is still left, which indicates that the image pertains to Mahayana Buddhism.

44. गनेशजननी माता विग्रहपा च जाइवी ।

45. Cunningham, *A, S, R*, Vol. III. p. 124, No. 36

46. *Handbook to the Sculptures*, 1922, pp. 143-44



### Images of Buddha.

There are several images of Buddha in various attitudes, in the open court-yard of the temple. The 'standing' images are in the style of the Gupta period, i.e., Buddha is represented as holding his right hand in the *abhaya* pose while the left hand holds the edge of his *sanghati* which covers the whole body.

One of these 'standing' images is crowned and ornamented and has, moreover, the eight principal events of Buddha's life, viz, his birth, enlightenment, first sermon and death, the offer of honey in the mango grove of Vaisali, the descent from the Trayas-trimsa heaven, the taming of the mad elephant at Rajagriha and the miracle of Sravasti, all depicted on the back-slab.

Another 'standing' image depicts the well-known scene of Buddha's descent from the Trayas-trimsa heaven, after preaching to his mother,

A 'seated' image represents the miracle in the mango grove of Vaisali, i. e. Buddha seated cross-legged with his hands in his lap, holding the cup of honey offered to him by a monkey.

Another represents Buddha seated with his hands in the *dharma-chakra* pose, preaching his first sermon in the deer park of Sarnath.

Several of the Buddha images are, as noted before, in the *blu-sparsa* pose, i. e., Buddha is seated, as at the moment of his enlightenment at Bodh-Gaya, in *vajrasana* or cross-legged on a double lotus, below the Bodhi tree, with the left hand in his lap, and the right touching the earth in token of calling on her to bear witness to his conquest over Mara, who tried to seduce him.

### Dhyani Buddha Aksobhya.

This is the principal figure outside the temple, as noted also by Cunningham. It measures over 5 ft in height, excluding the part of the pedestal which is under the floor (Fig. 9), and represents an ascetic seated cross-legged on a double lotus in the *blu-sparsa* pose. The body is covered with a diaphanous monk's garment, the right shoulder with the right arm being left bare. The neck is marked with *trivali*, the face has a serene and peaceful look with the eyes half-closed in meditation, the forehead bears an *urna* and is topped by *jata* and *usnis*. An elaborately carved halo surrounds the head

and is topped by foliage. The back-slab is adorned with leogryphs with garlands hanging from their mouths, and a throne with pillars supporting an architrave with *amalakā*-like ends. Above the shoulders are two figures seated in *lalitasana* each on a separate pedestal, and two flying *vidyadhuras* bearing garlands. On the halo is inscribed the usual Buddhist creed, and near the head is a short inscription, *tun Aksobhya vajra hun*, giving the name of the deity.

Aksobhya is one of the five Dhyani or celestial Buddhas, the four others being Amitabha, Vairochana, Ratnasambhava, and Amoghasiddhi. He is represented in his *sulhana* as of a blue complexion and sitting in the *bhūsparsa* pose. His crest is a *vajra* and his *vahana* a pair of animals. His divine Buddha-sakti is Lochana, who, in sculpture or painting, is represented in a sitting posture, in most cases *lalitasana*, her two hands generally hold a lotus each, the left exhibiting the *abhaya* pose and the right resting on the right foreleg in the *varada* pose. His divine Bodhi-sattva is Vajra-pani, or the wielder of the *vajra*.

From the inscription on the image itself as well as iconographic literature<sup>47</sup>, the main image is easily identified as Aksobhya. The figure above his right shoulder, holding a *vajra* in the right hand raised to his breast, is Vajrapani, Aksobhya's divine Bodhi-sattva, and the figure above the left shoulder, whose left hand holds a lotus with the *abhaya* pose, and the right hand exhibits the *varada* pose, is Lochana his divine Buddha-sakti. Most part of the pedestal being imbedded in the floor, no *vahana* is visible, nor did we notice the *vajra* crest.

### Avalokitesvara Images

As noted in connection with the new-found bronzes, there are three classes of Avalokitesvara images, two-handed, four-handed and six-handed. There are several images of these types at Devasthan, out of which two or three are most interesting,

#### Two-handed Avalokitesvara.

There are two very similar specimens of this variety, one of which is reproduced as Fig. 10. The peculiar coiffure, the necklace, which resembles the juvenile ornament called 'tiger nails' in Bengal and has a locket in the middle, and the scarf passing round the thighs

47. Bhattacharyya, *Buddhist Iconography*, p. 4

and making a knot on the left, are points to be specially noticed. The deity is attended by Hayagriva with his staff. In one specimen, the deity has a *phuti*, placed on a lotus, and his attendant holds a noose in addition to the staff.

### Six-handed Avalokitesvara.

There are four specimens of this rather rare variety at Devasthan, some of the 'standing' type, and some 'seated'. Two of the former type are represented in Figs. 9 and 11 (right hand images). The three right hands exhibit respectively the *varada* pose, a round object, and an *aksamala*, while the left three similarly hold a *kamandalu*, a *padma* and a *fasa*. The deity wears a cloth reaching down to the ankles and a scarf of deer skin passes over the left shoulder under the right arm. The head wears a *jalamukuta*, with the effigy of Amitabha (in some cases). The deity is attended on either side by Tara and Sudhanakumara, and the halo is inscribed with the Buddhist creed.

In 1903, Dr. Vogel, noting on a six-armed Lokeshvara in the Sarnath Museum, remarked that such images were not very common in medieval India<sup>48</sup>. In the Hindu shrine of Kurkihar we have four of these images, and one more collected from Kurkihar is now in the Indian Museum<sup>49</sup>. In 1922 Dr. Binaytosh Bhattacharyya suggested an identification of the Sarnath image as *Sugati-sandarsana Lokeshvara*, on the basis of a *sadhana* in a manuscript of the *Abhisekavidhi* in the Durbar Library of Nepal<sup>50</sup>. Subsequently he withdrew the suggestion<sup>51</sup>. Although the image thus baffles exact identification, we can say that the variety of six-armed Avalokitesvara which these images most closely correspond to is the *Sugati-sandarsana Lokeshvara*, who according to the above *sadhana* should exhibit the *abhaya* and *varada* poses and a rosary in the three right hands, and a *kamandalu*, a lotus and a *tridandi* (or a staff with a trident head) in the three left ones.

Again, the presence of an effigy of Dhyani Buddha Aksobhya, the spiritual father of Manjusri, in the tiara of one of these images at Kurkihar, complicates the problem of identification, as we know of no variety which tallies with it.

48. A. S. I. *Annual Report*, 1903-4, pp. 214-15 and plate. Some more are on the Pretsila hill and at the Matangesvar temple near Gaya.

49. Bloch, *Supplementary Catalogue, Indian Museum*, p. 57, No. 5860.

50. *Proceedings of the Second Oriental Conference*, 1922, p. 283.

51. Bhattacharyya, *Buddhist Iconography*, p. 59, footnote 2.

### Manjusri Images.

At Devasthan there are only two varieties of this image, named respectively Vagisvara and Manjuvara and distinguished from each other mainly by the attitude of the *vahana*, a lion.

In Vagisvara images the god is seated in *ardha-paryanka* pose on a crouching lion, with his left hand resting on the seat and holding a lotus on which a *puti* is placed, and with his right hand in the *varada* pose. The *sadhana* indicates that the right hand should be displayed artistically, or *lilaya-sthitam*<sup>52</sup>, which may be the *varada* pose of the present image.

In the 'other variety, called Manjuvara, the god is seated in *lalitasana* on a *roaring* lion, with his two hands in the *dharmachakra* pose. His face, in contrast with that of his *vahana*, exhibits serene satisfaction, as befits the eternal instructor of mankind in knowledge. On his two sides rise two lotus stalks on each of which is a *puti* representing no doubt the *Prajnaparamita* scripture, as laid down in his *sadhana*<sup>53</sup>.

### Tara Images

There are several Tara images in the collection, both 'seated' and 'standing', and all of the usual Khadiravani type.

### Jambhala.

There is a fine image of this Buddhist god of wealth at Devasthan, (Fig. 12). Though credited by his *sadhana* with 'an easily excitable' temper, he is depicted here, as elsewhere, with a fat body and rotund belly, and decorated with jewels and costly ornaments. He is one-faced and seated in *lalitasana*, the right leg hanging down and resting on a foot-stool. He carries two peculiar symbols in his hands, which mark him as the emanation of Dhyani Buddha Ratna-sambhava, namely, a *mala-linga* or citron in the right hand and a mongoose in the left, belching out jewels when pressed by the god's hand, or *ratna-pravarasamana-nakuli-dharam*<sup>54</sup>.

52. Bhattacharyya, *Buddhist Iconography*, p. 24

53. Bhattacharyya, *Buddhist Iconography*, p. 25.

54. Bhattacharyya *Buddhist Iconography*, p 114 footnote and *sadhana* A 310.

## V. THE PLACE OF KURKI HAR IN GAUDAN ART

As indicated in the previous chapters, the ruins of Kurkihar have proved a veritable mine of antiquities, mostly Buddhistic and dating from about the ninth century A.D. Archaeologist after archaeologist visiting the village has testified to its wealth of Buddhistic relics, and we may take it that the ruins mark the site of Kukkuṭapada-vihāra which was named after Kukkuṭapadagiri, the hill associated with the Buddhist apostle Kasyapa and the expected messiah, Maitreya. Whether this hill be the group of low hills about half a mile north of the village or the Sobhnath group, some six miles to the south-west, the monastery named after it was at Kurkihar.

Pilgrims thronged to it from every part of the continent of India from Kerala or modern Malabar, from Sakala or modern Sialkot in the Punjab, from Kanchi or Conjeveram<sup>55</sup>, from further south, the Pandi viṣṭya (as read by Mr. R. D. Banerji on an inscribed image from Kurkihar now in the Indian Museum)<sup>56</sup> or Pandya deśa (as read by us on an Avalokitesvara image still lying at Devisthan)<sup>56a</sup>.

Most of the inscriptions, are of the nature of dedicatory labels or merely record the Buddhist creed and are undated. They are in the 'nail-headed' characters which mark the transition from the Gupta to the Nagari script, and were in use in Eastern India in the ninth century A.D. The style of the majority of the Kurkihar images also points to the same age<sup>56b</sup>. This was the hey-day in the rule of the Pala Kings of Gauda, the foremost Buddhist rulers of that age, who claimed suzerainty over North India, 'from the Himalayas

55. Cunningham, *A. S. R.* Vol. I, p. 15 and Vol. XV, p. 5.

56. *Pravasi*, Vaisakh, 1335 B. S., p. 13 and Fig. 16.

56. (a) To this may be added the island of Bali from which came Maleka (780 A.D.), whose effigy and inscription occur on a new-found bronze image of Vagisvara (*J. I. S. O. A.* Vol. II, pp. 71, 73 and 76.)

56. (b) Some of the bronze images of Kurkihar are assigned to earlier dates (see footnote 15a above), but from the absence of any account of the monastery in the works of the Chinese pilgrims, and the fact that the stone of the Kurkihar sculptures is of the kind commonly used in the Pala period and not the sand-stone used in the Gupta age, Mr. Jayaswal concludes that the monastery was founded under Pala rule. He reads *Apamāka Mahavihara* on one of the new-found bronzes and takes, this to be the name of at least one of the monasteries at Kurkihar. (*J. I. S. O. A.* Vol. II, pp. 76 and 72.)

to the Vindhya, from sea to sea'<sup>57</sup>. According to the seventeenth century Tibetan work, Taranath's *History of Buddhism in India*<sup>58</sup>, Dhiman and his son Bitapala established a new school of art in Gauda in those days. The *Pag Sam Jon Zang*, a slightly later work confirms this statement but places the centre of activity at Nalanda (in Magadha) and not Varendra (North Bengal). From a comparative study of the sculptures of this age Mr. R. D. Banerji inclined to this view<sup>59</sup>, and some scholars opine that Schiefner, who translated Taranath into German in 1860, read the word wrongly.<sup>60</sup>

However that may be, it is beyond question that some of the best artistic productions of the age are to be found in old Magadha. Explorations in modern days have proved Bodh-Gaya and Nalanda to have been the most prominent centres, the former evidently because it was the site of Buddha's enlightenment, and the latter because it had a far-famed university. The sculptures discovered at Kurkihar from time to time, especially the hoard of bronzes recently unearthed, indicate that this site, associated as it was with the apostle Kasyapa, was not behind the other two in importance, and was probably a busy manufactory of images as well.

We have referred to the high artistic and technical skill in casting images in bronze and plating them with gold which is indicated by the new-found images of Kurkihar. Some of the bronzes as well as stone statues are highly ornamented. One thing noticeable is the paucity of Brahmanical images. Another noticeable feature is the paucity of the names of the artisans on the images, only two names so recorded being known, viz., *Sutradhara Rejhu* on an Avalokitesvara image in the Indian Museum<sup>61</sup> and a certain *Karmakara* on the new-found bronze Visnu.

57. *Gauda-lekha-ma'a*, The Badal Pillar Inscription, verse 5.

58. *Indian Antiquary*, 1875, p. 102.

59. *Pravasi*, Vaisakh, 1335 B. S., p. 14.

60. A. S. I., *Annual Report*, 1921-22, p. 104.

61. Bloch, *Supplementary Catalogue, Indian Museum*, p. 53, No. 5831.

## VI GAYA : HISTORY AND ENVIRONS

### History of the Holy City

The antiquity of Gaya is now a matter of conjecture. Its name does not occur in the Vedas, the earliest record of India, but it is mentioned in later works like the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. The *Smritis* or religious codes of Atri, Vasistha, and Yajnavalkya recognise Gaya as a place where the offering of *pitrus* is gratifying to the manes. This eminence Gaya holds in the Hindu mind to the present day, the *Pitripaks* or dark fortnight of the month of Asvin (generally, September) being held most propitious for the ceremony.

It appears that during the ascendancy of Buddhism in Northern India it was Bodh-Gaya, seven miles away, that drew votaries to it from far and near, while Hindu Gaya or Brahma Gaya, as Abul Fazl later called it, was of little note. Thus, Fa Hien who visited India in the fifth century A. D. wrote that "inside the city was all emptiness and desolation", and Hiuen Tsang who came in the seventh century said nothing about it. Even in the eighth century when, according to MM. Haraprasad Sastri, a well known verse was composed, Gaya had no place among the sacred cities of India.

The rise of Gaya dates probably from the time of the Guptas who were ardent Vaisnavas. The earliest Gupta copper plate so far discovered, viz., that of Samudra Gupta's time, had a 'Garuda' seal and relates to *Gaya visaya*<sup>2</sup>. The grants in *Gaya visaya* of the earlier Pala kings, who appear to have been staunch Buddhists, were, however, in favour of Buddhist establishments, as shewn by the two copper plates of Dharma-pala and Deva-pala found at Nalanda<sup>3</sup>. But from the time of the fifth king of the line, who bore the pronounced Vaisnava name of Narayana-pala, almost all the inscriptions of the Pala period discovered at Gaya record the erection either of Suryan or of Vaisnavite structures. A list of these inscriptions compiled from Mr. R. D. Banerji's memoir, *The Palas of Bengal*, is given below, (the page and plate numbers refer to that work.)

1. अथोष्ठा मधुरा माथ काशी काशी अत्रिका । पुरौ दारावती देव समैते मोक्षदायिका ॥

2. Fleet, *Gupta Inscriptions* p. 254, and *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1897, p. 24.

3. Archaeological Survey of India *Annual Report* 1927-28, p.138, and Varendra Research Society, *Monograph* No. 1, p. 28.

[Of Narayanpala's reign, 860-911 A. D.]

(1) Bhandadeva's inscription now fixed in the north wall of a south-facing room adjoining the small Nrisimha temple in the north-east corner of the Vishnupada enclosure. It is dated year 7 of Narayanpala's reign and opens with an invocation to Visnu in the Nrisimha incarnation, and records the erection of a monastery for Brahman ascetics ( p. 61 and pl. XXIV).

[Of the reign of Gurjara King Mahendrapala of Kanauj, 900 A. D.]

(2) Sahadeva's inscription 'at the bottom of a slab containing the images of the ten incarnations of Visnu, fixed in the wall of a modern temple of Siva at Rama-Gaya' on the east bank of the Falgu. It is dated year 8 of the reign. Mr. Banerji holds that this is a proof of Mahendrapala's occupation of the Gaya tract. (pp. 63-64, pl. XXXI, No. 2)

[Of the reign of (Mahipala's son), Nayapala, 1030-1045 A. D.]

(3) Inscription of Visvadya now fixed on a pillar of the gate of Krishna-Darika temple. It is dated year 15 of the reign and records the erection of a temple of Visnu (p. 77 and pl. XXV)

(4) Inscription of Visvarupa now fixed (in the south wall) inside the small temple of Nrisimha in the Visnupada enclosure. It is dated year 15 of Nayapala's reign and records the erection of a temple (or temples) of Gadadhara (pp. 77-79, pl. XXVI)

[Of the reign of (Nayapala's son) Vighrapala 1055-1076 A. D. ]

(5) Inscription of Visvarupa, now fixed outside the small temple of Vatesa Siva. under the Akshayavata tree and in sight of the large Prapitamehesvara temple. It is dated year 5 of the reign and records the erection of two temples to Siva as Vatesa and Prapitamohesvara, respectively (pp. 80-82 and p. 95 and pl. XXVII)

(6) Inscription of probably the same Visvarupa seen by Mr. Benerji on a stone on which 'the present image of Godadhara' rests. Only the first few lines beginning with an invocation to Martanda were visible, (pp. 82-83 and p. 95 and plate XXXI, No. 3), This inscription cannot be seen now.

(7) Inscription of Yakshapala (probably a successor of Visvarupa) seen by Cunningham at Satighat and now fixed close by in the southern wall of the passage to the sanctum of Sitala devi on the north bank of the Uttara-Manasa tank. It begins with an invocation to Surya, and records the excavation of the Uttara-Manasa tank and other acts of piety (pp. 95-97, and pl. XXIX)



[ Of the reign of Govindapala, 1175 A. D. ]

(8) Inscription of 14 horizontal lines, and one vertical on the back slab of the image of a four-handed female deity, now fixed on the west face of a dead wall (probably of the Dharmasala of Rai Durlabh, as noticed by Francis Buchanan) south of the Gadadhara temple and east of the small Saksi Mahadeva temple close by. It is dated year 14 of the reign and Vikram-samvat 1232 or A. D. 1175 and begins with an invocation to Visnu (p. 109 and pl. XXVIII). It was noticed also by Cunningham, *vide* A. S. R., Vol III, p. 125, No. 18.

These inscriptions indicate the prevalence of Visnu worship at Gaya in the tenth and eleventh centuries, but they throw no light either on the legend of Gayasura and Visnupada or the present sanctity of Gaya as a place propitious for the offering of pinda to the manes.

Dr. Rajendra-lala Mitra interpreted the legend as an allegory of the triumph of Hinduism, and the Visnupada as an object of worship of the Buddhists appropriated by the Hindus. Though at some of the outlying shrines, notably, on the Pretsila hill, and at the Matangesvar temple in the doab east of Bodh-Gaya, the relics of the two faiths commingle, we have no trace of Buddhism in the shape of images and inscriptions in the town of Gaya itself, as we find none of Hinduism at Bodh-Gaya. From the inscriptions found at the two centres it appears that they flourished side by side from the ninth to the twelfth century and then fell together before the Muslim invasion, (the Buddhist centre not to rise again except as a Saiva possession in the sixteenth century, as will be seen later).

There is a break in the records of Gaya during the 'Pathan period,' for between Laksmansasena's Saktipur grant (end of the twelfth century) in which a Gayali priest is mentioned<sup>4</sup>, and the inscription of Prataprudra of Warangal (beginning of the sixteenth century) referring to the Surya-kund temple of Gaya<sup>5</sup>, or the tradition of Sri Chaitanya's visit to the Visnupada about that time, there is hardly any mention of Gaya anywhere. From one or two inscriptions issued early in this period, Mr. R. D. Banerji concludes that the tract went then by the name of Pithi<sup>6</sup>,

4. *Bangiya Shikhyā, Parisud Patrikt.* 1337 B. S., p. 219.

5. *Journal of Francis Buchanan* for Patna and Gaya, edited by V. H. Jackson, pp. 44 and 45.

6. *Banglar Itihās, Part I.* p. 332

It was probably at the end of this period when there was a revival of Hinduism, that Gaya was given a place among the five spots of Northern India sacred to the manes<sup>7</sup>, with the present legend of its origin. The current authority for this is the *Gaya-mahatmya*, which is but an appendix of the *Vayu Purana* and given in abridged forms in the *Agni* and *Garuda Puranas*<sup>8</sup>. Dr. Francis Buchanan, who visited Gaya in 1811, writes, "They say that the place had lain waste and was unfrequented until about 4 or 5 centuries ago, when the Gayalis began to recover and pilgrims to return, but it is further acknowledged that the place did not recover any considerable celebrity until about 200 years ago"<sup>9</sup>. Buchanan is not far wide of the mark.

### Fusion of Faiths in Gaya

Although it is as the holiest spot for the offering of *pinda* to the manes that Gaya attracts people from all over India, its wealth of iconographic remains presents a splendid field for the study of the development of the eclectic Hinduism of the present day. Among the images of Hindu deities of the medieval period collected in the different shrines of Gaya, the most numerous are those of Surya, Visnu and Siva-Parvati. But there are now only one temple assigned to Surya, and but two or three to Visnu, and none at all to Siva-Parvati, though there are several in which Siva is worshipped in his *linga* form; while temples to Rama, a deity evidently of recent growth, are common. Of Krisna there is but one temple, that of Krisna-Darika.

The three most prominent of the Sivas are Pita-mahesvara (with Sitala as his *Sakti*) in the north of the town, Prapitamahesvara (with Mangala-Gauri, the only deity in Gaya before whom animal sacrifice is offered, as his *Sakti*) in the south-west of the town and Vridhja-prapita-mahesvara (with Sankata as his *Sakti*) to the south of the town. The other important lingas are Ramesvara on the top of Ramasila hill, and Matangesvara in the doab east of Bodh-Gaya.

Of the temples of Rama the most important are one at the foot of the Ramasila hill, and another near the Mangala-Gauri temple, both

7. कुरुक्षेत्र-मया-गङ्गा-प्रभात-पुष्कराणि च । तीर्थानि तानि पञ्चानि श्राद्धकाले भवन्तीह ॥

8. Haraprasad Sastri, *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, 1928, p. 339.

9. Buchanan's *Journal*, p. 41

of them belonging to the Tikari Raj, while the whole of Rama-Gaya on the east bank of the Falgu is named after this incarnation, though the central image in its principal shrine represents Laksmi-Narayana.

There are many curiosities among the objects of worship at Gaya. The image on the top of the Brahma-yoni hill which stands for Savitri or Brahmani, is a five-faced and ten-armed Durga, and that in the temple in the doab east of Bodh-Gaya, called Sarasvati, is a ten-armed Durga with one head. The *fitla* of Mangala-Gauri is represented by the female breast, and the hand in the temple of Sita-kund in Rama-Gaya (where offerings are made) is evidently the hand of some ancient sculpture, gracefully holding probably a 'citron'. The exquisite Mukhalingam set up on the Gauri-pat in a small temple near Matangesvara appears to have belonged to some image. In some instances Buddhist deities have been taken over as Hindu ones without question<sup>10</sup>.

### The Holy Spots in Gaya Town

Some valuable information about these is given in the *Journal* of Dr. Francis Buchanan, who visited Gaya in 1811, and in volumes I and III of the *Archaeological Survey Reports* of Sir Alexander Cunningham, who came there some fifty years later. but great changes have taken place since.

The Visnupada temple standing on the Falgu in the south of the city is now deemed the holiest shrine of Gaya. It stands in a paved enclosure containing numerous minor temples, of which the Gayesvari temple at the north entrance and the Nrisimha temple in the north-east corner are worthy of note.

To the north of this enclosure stands the Gadadhara temple surrounded by the Kumari-devi, the Sakshi Mahadeva and other temples which, as Buchanan suggests, once formed a separate enclosure.

About a quarter of a mile west of Visnupada is the temple of Adi-Gadadhara, the image itself being carved on the face of a rock. South of Visnupada is Gaya-sir represented by a similar crude image of Visnu carved on a rock, where pindas are offered.

10. Regarding one of these images Dr. Buchanan observed in 1811, "A Brahman called it Laksmi although it is male, but I soon found that these images were viewed with no interest and were called by each person by whatever name first occurred to the person's memory". *Journal*, p. 33.

Some distance north-west of Visnupada are the tank and temple of Surya kund, and further westwards in the heart of the town is the temple of Krishna-Darika, and still further west outside the town is the shrine of Akshaya-Vata with the tall temple of Prapitamahesvara Siva close by.

To the east of Prapita-mahesvara, on a spur of the hill overlooking the Vaitarini kund now called Bhasmakuta, there are four temples dedicated respectively to Janardana, Mangala-Gauri, Rama and Markandesvara Siva.

In the Lakhanpura ward of the town, a little to the south of the cremation ground, is the well-frequented shrine of Sankata and Vriddha-prapita-mahesvara.

About a mile north of Visnupada is the Uttar-manasa tank (the Dakshin-manasa being near Visnupada). Near Uttaramanasa are the Sati-Ghat, the modern Sitala temple, and the tall temple of Pitamahesvara Siva.

### Rama-Gaya

Round the town of Gaya there are some isolated hills which are now assigned to some deity or other. The one on the east bank of the Falgu opposite Visnupada is nearly 250 feet high and is associated with the legend of King Dasaratha's spirit accepting *p'ndas* made of sand offered by Sita. In token of this a fine carving in stone representing a human hand holding some ball-like object is stuck in the floor of the shrine of Sita-kund at the foot of the Rama-Gaya hill. In front of the shrine is the upper part of a female figure holding a Siva linga in the upper right and a *putli* in the upper left hand.

In a small temple close by is a sculpture two feet high, representing the Varaha-avatara of Visnu. The avatara stands in the *alidha* pose, with the four attributes of Visnu in the four hands. Prithvi sits on one elbow placing one of her hands in the snout. The pedestal is formed by two serpents coiled together, their heads rising on the two sides in the shape of the busts of a man and a woman.

The chief shrine, known as Rama-Gaya *vedi*, contains numerous Siva-Parvati images and a few Nava-graha slabs and other sculptures. The central image in the shrine is that of a four-armed Visnu standing with Laksmi to his right and Garuda seated on the pedestal, and a male and female attendant on either side. A lion and

a horse are engraved on either side of the pedestal and between them the figures of five men dancing and beating drums (with their hands).

An inscribed Nava-graha slab in this temple is pointed out as containing the inscription of King Mahendrapala of Kanauj (referred to above as inscription No 2), but it does not appear to be so. According to Mr. Panerji, the inscription is on a Dasavatara slab fixed in the wall of a temple of Siva. But the large temple of Siva at Rama-Gaya being deserted and closed, the point could not be verified by us. In front of the shrine there is an image with three faces and four hands, the two upper holding a *gada* and a lotus, and the two lower ones apparently in the *varada* pose. There is a female attendant on either side. It has been supposed to represent Dattatreya, a god most popular among the Marathas and attended generally by a dog.

On the top of the hill is a temple dedicated of Hanumana, who is represented merely by a crude block of stone besmeared with vermilion. Buchanan does not mention either Rama-Gaya or its Sita-kund. It seems that the shrines were not in existence in his time.

### Brahma-yoni hill

This hill, which is 460 feet high, stands about a mile south-west of Gaya town. It is generally identified with the peak of Gaya-sirsa, from which Buddha delivered a sermon; but there is absolutely no trace left on it of Buddhism. The hill is now assigned to Brahma, and the temple at its top, as well as the temple and the kund at its foot, is assigned to his wife Savitri, though the image called after her is that of a five-headed and ten-handed female seated on a bull. As this image was noticed by Cunningham (in 1865) and not by Buchanan (in 1811), it probably came into existence between these dates.

The temple on the top is ascribed by Buchanan to a Maratha chief, Balaji Pandit<sup>11</sup>. It is reported that in 1913, when the temple was damaged by lightning, the Gwalior Durbar granted money for its repair.

The temple at the foot and the steps by which the hill is ascended were built in 1850 by Balwant Rao, an officer of Jiaji Rao Scindia of Gwalior, as is recorded in a tablet over the entrance to the temple.

11. Buchanan's *Journal*, p. 50.

The kund in front of this temple is associated with Sri Chaitanya's initiation as a sanyasi.

By the side of the steps, some way up the hill, we see a small image of Surya of a type common in Gaya. The Sungod is represented as standing with a lotus in each of his two hands, and with a male attendant waving a *chowri* to his right, and a female attendant holding a fan to his left.

The central image in the temple on the top of the hill is that of a five-faced and ten-armed goddess seated in *lātitaśana* on a bull (on the back of which a saddle cloth is spread). She has a sword, a quiver, a battle axe, *paśa* and an *akṣamālā* in her five right arms, and a goad and a bow in two of her left hands, while a third rests on the head of the bull, and two are broken off. The five heads have the *jāta-mukuta*. The image evidently represents some form of Durga.

Behind this is the fragment of a sculpture which is taken as Gayatri (co-wife of Savitri), but is really the upper part of a Surya image.

Three other images are housed in this temple. One is a Siva-Parvati of the usual type. One is a Surya similar to that described before, but with both the attendants male. Pingala who stands to the right has his usual pose of readiness to write. The attendant to the left, Dandi, has one hand in the *abhaya* pose, and the other at his *kati*.

There is another Surya image, larger and finer than the last one and probably of an earlier date. Surya stands with a lotus in each hand, a standing figure between his two legs, and Aruna seated at his feet. A sword hangs from his belt. Pingala stands on his right, and Dandi on the left holds a staff.

There is a small walled enclosure in front of the temple, which contains fragments of a *Lokapala* slab, a Surya image, and a rather fine figure of a female in *jātamukuta* with a trident in her left hand.

South of this enclosure is a natural cleft in the rock called Brahma-yoni, after which the hill is named.

### The Rama sila Hill.

This hill which is 370 feet high, stands north of the town a little beyond the Railway bridge. The imposing temple of Rama at its foot was built by a Rani of Tikari, and the flight of steps up to the

hill top which, according to Buchanan, had been constructed originally by Babu Krisna Chandra Basu of Calcutta<sup>12</sup>, was re-constructed in 1886 by Maharaja Ran-bahadur Singh of Tikari, as recorded in the marble tablets at the foot of the steps. Close by is the image of a four-handed seated Avalokitesvara.

The temple on the top of the hill is an old one, though assigned now to a Siva linga called Ramesvara or Patalesvara. There are two slabs in this temple, one depicts Surya standing inside a temple, and the other the "Mother and child" figure, the only specimen of this type in Gaya. In the latter the lattice work of the *charpai* is indicated by deep lines, and a linga on Gauripat is engraved in a corner.

The pavillion in front where *pindas* are offered, is said to have been built by Babu Krisna Chandra Basu. In front of it under a tree are three images of Visnu and one of Surya, 2½ ft. high. In the latter there are two attendants, one of whom holds a staff and the other leans on a stick. There is a small new temple of Rama to the north of the main temple.

Buchanan records that he saw several Buddhist images (one of them brought from Kurkihar) on this hill, but none is now visible except the Avalokitesvara noticed above. It may be that it was Pretsila, where there are several fine Buddhist images even now, that Buchanan was referring to, or it may be that the images of the Ramsila hill have been removed to the Mannulal Library in Gaya town, where there is a fine collection of Buddhist images.

### The Pretsila Hill.

This hill which rises to a height of 540 feet, is 6 miles north-west of Gaya town, and is reached by a fine road with a row of trees on each side, made, according to Buchanan, by Babu Madanmohan Datta, a Bengalee<sup>13</sup>. At the foot of the hill is a kund surrounded by a pavillion where *pindas* are offered and some small temples built originally by Babu Madanmohan and restored in 1908 by Rai Bahadur Surajmal Seoprasad, as a tablet on one of the temples records. This temple contains a Pancha-mukh Siva linga, with a sculpture resting against the wall behind it, which represents Parvati standing with her two sons Ganesa and Kartika on either side.

12. Buchanan's *Journal*, pp. 27-29.

13. Buchanan's *Journal*, pp. 32-33.

The long flight of steps by which the hill is ascended was built by Babu Madanmohan Datta in 1774, as recorded (in Bengali as well as in Sanskrit) in a tablet fixed on a wall at the top.<sup>14</sup> Several images of Surya, Visnu, Mahisa-mardini, Siva-Parvati, as well as of some Buddhist deities, are set up by the side of the steps.

Some of these images are very remarkable, such as the six-hand Avalokitesvara at the very first step, which belongs to the early Pala age, as indicated by the 'bead cable' border and the script of the Buddhist creed inscribed round the top. The deity stands with a *dhyani* figure in its *jatamukuta*, a deer-skin scarf and a *upavita* across its breast, an *aksamala*, a round object, and the *varada* pose in the three right hands, and a *padma* (the stalk of which ends in a loop above), some round object, and a *kamandulu* in the three left hands. The two-handed Tara stands on the right with joined palms, and the four-handed Bhrikuti on the left with her two upper hands in the *anjali* pose, and the two lower holding an *aksamala* and a *kamandulu*. Two other sculptures of early types, a large sized Surya, and a small four-handed Visnu are to be found here.

At the top of the hill is the Pretsila, a rock with a golden vein where *pidas* are offered. The pavillion above this rock is said to be the gift of Babu Madanmohan, while the cloisters with flat-arch roofs which form a quadrangle with it are attributed to Rani Ahalya Bai of Indore.

There are three fine sculptures, all Buddhistic, in the middle cloister, viz a Buddha in the *blu-skrtsa* pose, 18" high, and a six-handed Avalokitesvara like the one described above, with a four-handed seated Avalokitesvara, 3 ft. high between them. This last sculpture shows the god as seated in *lalitasana* on a 'lotus seat', with Amitabha seated in the *jatamukuta* and another *dhyani* figure a little above the right shoulder. The right foot rests on a lotus, the upper right hand holds an *aksamala*, the lower right hand, which is in the

14. The Bengali version begins thus,—

কীর্তি কৃষ্ণায় নমঃ । ইতিভক্ত্যনুষ্ঠানং । শিববহুর্গা শরণং । জয় রাম ॥

এই বর মাগি প্রেত তোমার চরণে । সবংশে কৃপণে বাগ নবনমোহনে ॥ প্রোকার ॥

Then come some verses in Sanskrit followed by the name of the donor, Madanmohan Datta of Calcutta, and those of his agent, treasurer, accountant and time-keeper. The year of construction is given as 1693 Saka in chronogram and in figures. The Sanskrit version is to the same purport.



*varada* pose, holds some small object; the upper left hand holds a lotus and the lower left a *putli*. Below the 'lotus seat' are carved two seated figures, two-handed Tara in the *anjali* pose on the right with a lotus above her shoulders, and four-handed Bhrikuti with the two upper hands in *anjali*, and the two lower holding respectively an *aksamala* and a *kamandalu* or chowri. A flask-like object is engraved in the pedestal between the two figures.

Behind a rock to the west are some fine sculptures of Hindu gods, viz, two specimens of Siva-Parvati, one Surya and a Visnu of an early type. In this last image, which is  $2\frac{1}{4}$  ft. in height, Visnu is represented with all his four hands hanging down, the two lower ones resting on the heads of the Gadapurusa and the Chakrapurusa.

### The Bakraur Doab and Dharmaranya,

This doab between the Lilajan and the Mohana, east of Bodh-Gaya, contains a number of Hindu shrines, where some Buddhistic relics also are preserved. The best way to visit them is to get down at the fifth milestone of the road from Gaya to Bodh-Gaya, and crossing the Lilajan go first to the Sarasvati temple which stands near the head of the doab. From here one can proceed southwards through Gangabigha village to the Matangesvar temples and thence to the Dharmaranya, and then turn westwards, and passing through Bakraur village and crossing the Lilajan again, join the road at Bodh-Gaya. This makes a circuit of some seven miles and takes nearly four hours, but is well worth all that time and trouble.

The Sarasvati mandir.—The central image in this temple called Sarasvati is fairly large and represents a ten-armed female standing in the *alidha* pose, with a trident, a shield, a lotus, a bow and a conch in her five left hands, and a sword, a *pasa* and other objects in the right five. She wears a crown and has a female attendant to her left, with a lingam beside her. The deity represented is evidently Durga. There are also two Siva-Parvati images in this temple, and in a niche outside is a small female figure. In an open plot in the compound fragments of Buddhistic sculptures, such as votive stupas, *chhatras*, thousand-Buddha slabs etc, are kept.

Gangabigha village.—The small temple to the south of the village contains a Nava-graha slab, a Siva-Parvati image and a leogryph piece. In this last sculpture which is over 3 feet in height,

the leogryph stands in its usual rampant pose on the back of a crouching elephant with the rider on its back holding the reins. On the head of the elephant sits its rider brandishing a sword. The sculpture is decorated with two rows of beads on one side and a pillar on the other.

A small but interesting figure is fixed in the wall of the temple to the north of the door. It represents a four-handed figure seated in *lalitasana* on a stool, with a male devotee on the right and a female one on the left. The upper right hand holds a chowri and the lower right rests on the knee in the *varada* pose, and there is a crown on the head. Fragments of chhatras etc are also found here.

A Mound and a Mukhalingam.—About a mile southwards is a high mound overgrown with jungle, probably the remains of some old Buddhist structure. On its west side near the base is a small temple in the centre of which stands a fine large Mukhalingam of black stone on a Gauri-pat. The lingam is nearly 12 inches across. The face has three eyes (the third one being vertical) and a *jalamukuta* of unusual beauty. There are four more sculptures in this temple (collected probably from the mound), viz., a chaitya with a T-shaped chhatra at the top and a gate where stands a female figure, a female figure seated in *lalitasana* (with a mace in the right hand and the left hand resting on the knee, and a lion in the pedestal,) a Surya with two attendants and a Siva-Parvati sculpture.

Matangesvara.—This group of four temples dedicated to Siva stands in a spacious enclosure. The temple in the southwest corner houses as many as nine old images besides the lingam, viz, a Ganesa, a broken Surya, a Visnu, another Surya with the horses, a large Visnu of the early type (with the Chakrapurusa and the Gadapurusa as attendants,) a fine large six-handed Avalokitesvara (very much like the one to be seen at the foot of Pretsila hill, with an inscription round the top and a devotee on either side of the pedestal,) a two-handed female diety, a four-handed male deity and a Siva-Parvati.

The female diety has her right hand in the *varada* pose and the left in the *abhaya* but holding a lotus. The attendant on the right who is a female holds a sword in one hand, and apparently a human head in the other. The attendant on the left has one hand uplifted, the other resting on his *kati*.

The male deity has a ball and a conch in the two upper hands, while his lower right hand rests on the head of a male attendant with his hands crossed over the breast, and the lower left hand rests on the head of a female attendant who has a chowri in one hand with the other hand resting on her *kati*. Four other images are fixed in the outside face of this temple.

In the west wall of the temple in the south-east corner of the compound is the image of an eight-armed female seated on a lion. In three of her right arms she holds a mace, a quiver, and a sword, the fourth hanging down in the *varada* pose; in three of her left arms she has a mace, a shield and a bow, the fourth one hangs down holding a conch.

On the west face of the middle temple is a stone tablet recording the date of its erection, and below it an image of a two-handed Avalokitesvara, with the right hand in the *varada* pose, while the left holds a lotus. A female attendant stands on the right with clasped hands, and a male attendant leans on a staff on the left. On the north side of the entrance is an image of Buddha seated in his preaching attitude above a *dharmachakra* flanked by two deer, a type of his image rather rare in the Gaya tract. In front of this image is a large block of stone containing an elaborately and deeply carved *padma-padmā*.

On the west face of the main temple there are two Bodhisattvas, one seated cross-legged in the *vyakhyana* pose, with two *dhyani* figures above the shoulders, and a similar composition in the *bhūṣaṇa* pose. There is one figure on the south wall in the *vyakhyana* pose, but without any *dhyani* figure or deer.

The last two temples having been closed at the time of our visit, it could not be known whether they have any sculptures inside.

The Dharmaranya.—This group of four temples enclosed by a low wall stands on the Mohana about half a mile south-east of Matangesvara. The sculptures here are almost all images of Hindu deities.

The northern temple contains a fairly large image of Surya standing on a lotus; Pingala stands on his right, and Dandi with a mace on his left. There are two smaller sculptures, a Surya and a Visnu, in this temple. Outside it is a tablet which records that Surajmal Seoprasad of Calcutta built this temple in 1905 A. D. (i.e.,

three years before he restored the temples at the foot of the Pretsila hill).

The temple to the south of the above contains a Siva-Parvati and a Visnu image. The one further south has a fine large Siva-Parvati inside it and a large broken Visnu image outside. The temple on the east side contains a rare four-handed image of Balarama over 3 ft. in height. The deity wears a fez-shaped cap, with a seven-branched snake hood above it. All the four hands hang downwards, two of them resting respectively on the *Chakrapurusa* who stands on the right (his one arm lifted, and the other bent), and the *Gada-nari* who stands on the left, her hands joined in the *anjali* pose. This is a fine piece of sculpture, probably of the later medieval period. By the side of the steps are a *dhyani* figure with the right hand lost, and an unusually large head with 'beaded' hair.

Buchanan saw here a temple of Parsanath frequented by Jains, but there is no trace of it now.<sup>15</sup> Was it that the above image of Balarama was mistaken for that of Parsanath?

Bakraur.—Turning westwards for Bodh-Gaya, we pass through Bakraur village, to the north of which is a high mound, evidently the remains of a considerable stupa and monastery of the Buddhists, as observed by Buchanan<sup>16</sup>. It was from this mound that the monolithic column of spotted sandstone with 'Mauryan polish' which stands at the cross roads at the south-west corner of the main hospital in Gaya town, was taken (in 1789).

Further on the way to Bodh-Gaya we pass a *math* of Saiva sadhus, with a large grave-yard on the bank of the Lilajana.

15. Buchanan's *Journal*, pp. 53-54.

16. Buchanan's *Journal*, pp. 54-55. "From Matunga Bapi I proceeded west to a large heap opposite to Buddh Gya, and near the river. I at first took it for a small hill, but was told that it was an old temple of the Buddhs, and I found that it was composed of bricks covered with a little earth. The people say they remember it as entire as the temple of Mahamuni now is, but that it was round and solid. Mr. Boddam removed many bricks for his buildings at Gya, which reduced it to a mere heap. In digging for the bricks he is said to have found a stone chest containing bones and many small images of Lak. He also removed a stone pillar which has been erected in Sahibgunj. A large image like that of Bhairab has also been found, but it has lately been covered with earth, so that I could not see it. Round this central temple are several pretty large heaps of brick, which have no doubt been accompanying buildings."

### The Barabar Hill range

This range, noted for its caves of the Mauryan period, may well be included in this account, though it contains very few monuments or relics of a later age. It is some sixteen miles north-east of Gaya town, and is reached by a road which runs eastwards from Bela railway station. In the sixth mile of this road is an isolated hill called Kawadol, at the foot of which are a huge stone image of Buddha in the *bhu-sp.r.s.* pose (with the Buddhist creed inscribed on the pedestal), and some monolithic columns. These are said to be the remains of a monastery built by Silabhadra, a scion of the royal house of Samatata or Lower Bengal and abbot of Nalanda. At the east end of the range is a peak over 500 feet high, from which Buddha is said to have viewed the kingdom of Magadha on his way to Rajagriha. It is now occupied by a temple of Siva named Siddhanath. Along the south face of the range are four or five caves, three of which, viz., Karn-chaupar, Sudama and Visva-jhopri, contain inscriptions of years 12 and 19 of Asoka's reign (middle of the third century B. C.) and a fourth one, the Lomasa-rishi cave, bears an inscription of the Gupta age. About a mile further east are the Nagarjuni caves one of which (called the Gopi cave) contains an inscription recording that the cave was bestowed on the Ajivaka monks by Asoka's grandson Dasaratha immediately after his accession, about 230 B. C. <sup>17</sup>

### Bodh-Gaya

A brief account of the remains at Bodh-Gaya is given in a separate chapter, a fuller account being beyond the scheme of the present work.

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17. Cunningham, *A. S. R.*, Vol. I, pp. 40-53.

## VII. THE SHRINES OF GAYA TOWN

### Gadadhara Temple.

This temple with the structures surrounding it forms a group adjoining the Visnupada enclosure. It is an elegant structure with a pillared hall in front, and though neither so big nor so important at present as the Visnupada temple, it is the older structure, built, as Buchanan says, "probably on the restoration of worship, but having become ruinous, in a great measure rebuilt lately".

From an inscription (No. 4 of Chapter VI) now fixed in the small Nrisimha temple in the Visnupada enclosure, Mr. R. D. Banerji concluded that the present temple of Gadadhara was built out of the ruins of the eleventh century temple mentioned in that inscription, but its outward appearance does not justify this conclusion. The same inscription mentions a *Gadadhara-adi-nilaya* which may refer to the present Adi-Gadadhara, about a quarter of a mile to the west. Mr. Banerji saw an inscription (No. 6) on the stone on which the image of Gadadhara rests, which, however, cannot be found now.

A flight of steps in front of the temple leads down to the Falgu. As observed by Buchanan, "South from this stair is a Dharmasala built by Rai Durlabh, father of Rajballabh, well-known in the English history of Bengal. In its wall is built a stone containing a defaced female image with an inscription." Judging from its present position, this may be inscription No. 8. Buchanan says that there was another inscription at the site, which recorded the erection of a stair and the temple of the Sun (which he identified with the Surya-kund temple) by Prataprudra of Warangal<sup>18</sup> (1497—1540 A. D.). This may be the inscription of 41 lines now seen in front of Panch-Ganesa near the Solahvedi in the Visnupada compound.

### Rama-mandir

In front of Gadadhara is a small shrine over the image of a two-handed Visnu, which is being worshipped by its *pujari* Sekhara Upadhaya as Rama (Fig. 13). The image has the conventional *vanamala*, and its two hands hang down to rest on the heads of the Gadapurusa and the Chakrapurusa, and evidently represents a Visnu of the Lokapala type.

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18. Buchanan's *Journal*, p. 44.

### Govindapala Inscription

Near the mandir and facing the Saksi-Mahadeva temple is a wall, probably the back wall of Rai Durlabh's Dharmasala mentioned by Buchanan. On it is fixed a stone slab containing a four-handed female figure with an inscription above it (No. 8.) The two upper hands of the figure hold respectively a *chakra* and a lotus, and the two lower an *aksamala* and a *kumudalu*. There is the figure of a lion at either corner of the base and a Siva-linga at the top, while the inscription itself opens with an invocation to Visnu, making a curious compound of creeds.

### Kumari-devi mandir

This small shrine consisting of a pyramidal tower over a square base and a porch in front, stands on the road, north of the Gadadhara temple. The stone image of the deity, which is called Kumari-devi, is generally kept covered up with a *sari* by the *pujari* Krishnabai Pathak, a Maharastriya priestess. We were, however, allowed to photograph it (Fig. 14). It is somewhat massive in design, and bears a *karanda-mukuta* or crown of three tiers, and ear-pendants of an elliptical shape. It has two hands, the right one holding a citron or pomegranate and the left a lotus, the stalk of which goes down to the pedestal. There is a Siva-linga on a Gauri-pat at the centre of the cell, and images of Siva-Parvati, Surya, Visnu, Ganesa etc. are placed all round the cell. The Surya image is without the usual horses.

### A stray collection of images

Near the entrance to the Visnupada enclosure there are some interesting images, such as, one of Siva-Parvati, a frieze containing images of the Lokapalas, an image of Sarasvati with a peacock as her *vahana*, etc. This *vahana* is usually found in South Indian images, that in North Indian ones being a ram, as in the specimens in the Varendra Research Society's Museum (Rajshahi). In an image in Rai Bahadur Radha-Krishna Jalan's collection at Patna, the *vahana* is a lion.

### An image of Vaisnavi

In a small square cell close by there are several stone sculptures, one of which is the rare image of a Vaisnavi blowing a conch. The image represents a four-handed female wearing *vanamala*, and having a

*gada*, a *sankha* and a *chakra* in three of her hands. This conforms to the *dhyana* of Vaisnavi, except that the fourth attribute *padma* is wanting, due evidently to the respective hand being occupied in holding the conch to the mouth.

### The Gayesvari Temple

This small temple dedicated to the present guardian deity of Gaya stands at the north gate of the Visnupada enclosure. The deity is represented by a fairly large Mahisamardini with her vehicle, a lion, standing behind her. The image, usually kept covered, has eight hands, two of which hang down, one in the *varada* pose and the other holding a citron. Two other hands hold a trident and a lotus.

Several stone sculptures are collected in this shrine, and on the north side of the entrance there is an inscription ( of 33 horizontal and 3 vertical lines ) of one Durgadas of Kausiki *gotra*. It is dated Vikrama samvat 1516 ( 1459 A. D. )

### An image of the Varaha-avatara

On the way from the Gayesvari temple to Visnupada there is a platform of stone. In one face of it is fixed a small panel representing Visnu in the Varaha-avatara standing in a chaitya niche.

### Nrisimha Temple

This small temple and two or three more like it stand in the north east corner of the Visnupada enclosure. They contain two important inscriptions, viz., Nos. 1 and 4 of Chapter VI.

### Visnupada Temple

This temple which enshrines 'the footprints of Visnu' is now the most important temple in Gaya. It is a work of the eighteenth century built by Rani Ahalya Bai of Indore, and consists of a tower, 100 ft. high on a conventional star-pattern base, and a domed and pillared natmandir, all in chiselled dark-coloured stone brought from the Patharkati quarry.

'The footprints of Visnu' lie in a circular trough in the floor. It is said that the saint Sri Chaitanya of Bengal went into a trance at the very sight of them. Two large bells hang in the porch, one probably cast in Nepal and presented by a Nepali chief, and the other, dated 1793, presented by Mr. Francis Gillanders, the collector of pilgrim-tax at Gaya, who died in 1821, and lies buried in the cemetery.



All round the main temple there are small temples and pillared halls, in some of which *ṇindas* are offered to the manes, the whole forming an enclosure with four gates at the four cardinal points. The eastern gate leads down to the Falgu, which washes the base of the rock on which the temples stand, and the south one to Gayasir.

### Adi-Gadadhara Temple

Leaving the Visnupada enclosure by the western gate and proceeding nearly a quarter of a mile along a ridge in that direction, we reach this temple, which is built on a rocky ridge overlooking the town. The images of Gadadhara and his three female attendants are carved on the face of the rock. Two carved pillars of the Gupta type support a roof to the north of the entrance and prove the antiquity of the shrine, which may indeed be the one referred to as *Gadadhara-adi-nilaya* in inscription No. 4.

### Surya Kund and Temple

This shrine is ascribed by Buchanan to King Prataprudra of Warangal. The image of Surya is of the usual type and about three feet high. Overhead are images of the Navagraha. There are two Sanskrit inscriptions in this temple; one of ten lines and dated 1429 Samvat in the reign of *Dillipati* Feroz Shah is fixed in the south wall of the narrow passage leading to the deity; and the other, dated year 1813 of the Buddha-Nirvana era and consisting of "25 lines of closely packed characters of a somewhat peculiar shape," is fixed in the porch and on the south side of the entrance. This latter inscription, taken with another of the same year found at Bodh-Gaya, is said to prove that at the end of the twelfth century the Gaya tract was called *Pithi* and was ruled by a Sena family<sup>19</sup>.

On the Kankhala platform of the kund on which the pilgrims offer *ṇindas* there is an image of an eight-armed and three-faced female sitting cross-legged on a lotus. Each face has three eyes, and two of the faces have a grim look.

### Krishna-Darika Temple

Further westwards, in the heart of the town is this modern temple built, as Buchanan observed, by the Gayalis for their entertainment. It is dedicated to Radha-Krishna and has a *ṇarikrama* in which some stone images are fixed. The chief interest of this temple lies in the inscription ( No. 3 ) fixed on the west pillar of its gate.

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19. *Banglar Itihasa*, Part I, p. 331.

### Aksaya-vata and Prapitamahesvara

This shrine is resorted to by all pilgrims for concluding the Gaya ceremonies. Close to the Aksaya-vata platform is a small temple of Siva on which is fixed an inscription of Visvarupa ( No. 5 ) recording the erection of two temples to Siva as "Vatesa" and "Prapitamahesvara." The linga in this small temple is called *Vatesa*, while that in the tall temple to its north is known as Prapitamahesvara.

### The Mangala-Gauri Group

The topmost temple of this group on the Bhaskmakuta hill is that of Janardana, an elegant stone structure with a pillared hall of the medieval period. A Gaja-Laksmi figure is carved on the lintel. The Visnu image in this temple is of an early type, with all the four hands hanging down.

Lower down is the shrine of Mangala-Gauri, represented here by the breasts of the Devi in stone, placed in an *arghya-pat*. The *Chandi* is read daily in a cloister south of the temple, while in front of it is the wooden frame for the *vali*, this being the only shrine in Gaya where animal sacrifice is offered. A Siva-Parvati image and a sculpture called Laksmi-Narayana are preserved in this temple, and a fragment of a large image of Visnu lies outside.

On a platform between this temple and the Rama mandir, there are a few fragments of sculpture, such as the lower part of a fine Surya image (similar to the large image seen on the Brahmayoni hill) and the lower part of a standing figure, on one side of which is a crouching lion with a crown-like object on its back, and on the other side a devotee.

Passing through the temple of Rama which belongs to the Tikari raj, we come to the temple of Markandesvara Siva. There are several images in the porch overlooking the kund, such as, Siva-Parvati, Mahisa-mardini, Ganesa and an image of an uncommon type. This last represents a female with a crown of coiled snake, canopied by a seven-hooded snake head, sitting in *lalitasana* with a three-petalled lotus in her right hand and a child in the left, and with a male devotee on her right and a female one on her left.

The small temple on the Vaitarini kund contains a Navagraha slab and a few other sculptures.

### Uttaramanasa, Sitala, Pitamahesvara etc.

These shrines stand in Ladranganj north of the Satighat, which is marked by a row of *sati* pillars. The temple of Sitala stands on the bank of the Uttaramanasa tank. The tutelary deity of the shrine is represented by a small Mahisa-mardini sculpture placed on one side of the sanctum, the centre being occupied by a large Surya image. The most interesting object in the temple is an inscription (No. 7) fixed in the south wall of its narrow passage. It opens with an invocation to Surya and records the excavation of the Uttaramanasa tank and other acts of piety of Yaksapala. Several stone images are collected in the sanctum. On the other side of the road stands the imposing temple of Pitamahesvara Siva.

### Gayasir.

This shrine, at which *pindas* are offered, stands on the road to the cremation ground. The *pith* is represented by an image of two-handed Visnu crudely carved on a rock. The present pavillion over it was built by Raja Madosvariprasad Singh of Benares in 1856, as recorded in a stone tablet on it. In the south wall of the pavillion is fixed an exquisite miniature in stone which represents Krisna standing in a graceful pose under the Govardhana hill with a male and a female companion on either side, each attended by a cow. West of this is the Gaya-kup which, according to Buchanan, was restored by Naro Pant of Burhanpur (in the Central Provinces).

### Sankata and Vriddha-pra-pita-mahesvara.

Sankata is represented in this shrine as a four-handed female with a *gada* and a *chakra* in the two upper hands, and the right lower hand placed on a Siva lingam, and the left lower on a child. The shrine of Mahesvara adjoins that of Sankata.

Collected under a tree in front of the temple are fragments of Buddha images, and votive stupas and a fine large image of Surya with a sword hanging from his belt. There could be no better illustration than this chance assemblage of the many changes of faith that Gaya has witnessed through the ages.

## VIII. BODH-GAYA.

### History of the shrine.

This dilapidated Buddhist shrine, seven miles south of the town of Gaya, comprises the Bodhi tree under which Buddha is said to have attained his enlightenment, the Vajrasana or his seat under that tree, and the Mahabodhi temple and its railing which are said to date from the time of Asoka. A vast number of votive stupas, images and ruined structures lie round about them. All these and the land around are now in the possession of the Saiva Mohant of Bodh-Gaya, who has his *math* close to the Buddhist shrine.

The name Buddha-Gaya came into vogue at the time of Amara Deva, as it is first found in his inscription<sup>20</sup>. The original name was Sambodhi, which appears in the eighth rock edict of King Asoka. This afterwards changed to Mahabodhi, as we find in later inscriptions and in the "Mo-ho-pu-ti" *vihara* of Hiuen Tsang.

A little to the north of Bodh-Gaya the two streams Lilajan and Mohana unite to form the Falgu. It was a secluded spot in Buddha's days, known as Uruvilva and held by the chieftain of a neighbouring village, who is called Senani in Buddhist literature. The place attained celebrity after Buddha's enlightenment and was considered by the Buddhists to consist of three areas, which were respectively named Gaya, Nadi, and Uruvel after the three Kasyapa brothers who, it is said, were the leaders of the Jatila or 'Matted hair' order of monks, then prominent in this tract. They were converted by Buddha himself, and became his prominent followers.

The Buddhist literatures of Ceylon, Burma and China abound in references to this greatest of all Buddhist shrines. The best known are the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims Fa Hien in the fifth century, and Hiuen Tsang in the seventh century A. D. The former found Bodh-Gaya a flourishing centre of Buddhism, containing three monasteries peopled by monks, and several shrines erected on sacred spots with images of Buddha installed in them. When Hiuen Tsang visited it, the Mahabodhi or chief monastery which had been built by a king of Ceylon consisted of 'six halls with towers of observation three stories high and peopled by more than one thousand monks studying the Mahayana philosophy'.

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20. *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. I, p. 84.

It seems that the shrine began to decline after the seventh century A. D., as most of the Buddhist inscriptions found there are of earlier dates<sup>21</sup>, and even the eighth century inscription of the reign of Dharmapala found there records the installation of a Chaturmukha Mahadeva<sup>22</sup>. From the tenth century, however, there was a slight recovery, as we find from the following inscriptions :—

(1) Inscription of Satrusena of the reign of Gopala II (tenth century), recording the installation of a Buddha image.<sup>23</sup>

(2) Inscription of year 11 of the reign of Mahipala (eleventh century) recording the installation of an image of Buddha and two shrines. This inscription is incised on the pedestal of one of the "Pancha-Pandava" images near the Mahabodhi temple.<sup>24</sup>

(3) Inscription of year 1170 of Asoka-challa-deva of Sapadalaksa or modern Ajmer.<sup>25</sup>

(4) Inscription of the Gahadavala king Jayacchandra of about 1190 A. D., recording the erection of a Buddhist shrine. This inscription is now in the Mohant's math.<sup>26</sup>

(5) Inscription of the Nirvana year 1913 of Dharma-raksita of Sapadalaksa, recording the erection of a temple.<sup>27</sup>

The Muslim conquest which soon followed dealt a death blow to Buddhism in Magadha. Hinduism too felt the shock, but managed to shake it off in the course of the next three or four centuries, after which it appeared in a new form appropriating to itself something of Buddhism and recognising Buddha himself as an avatara of Visnu, as we learn from the well-known verse of Jayadeva.<sup>28</sup> Thus it came to pass that the shrine of Mahabodhi which had fallen into utter

21. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1930, p. 26.

22. *Gauda Lekhamala*, p. 30

23. *Gauda Lekhamala*, p. 89.

24. *Banglar Itihasa*, I, p. 245-246.

25. *Bangiya Sahitya Parisad Patrika* for 1317, p. 214, and *Banglar Itihasa*, I, p. 347.

26. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1929, p. 18.

27. *Banglar Itihasa*, I, p. 331.

28. निन्दसि यज्ञविधिरुद्धः स्तुतिज्ञातं

सद्यहं दय-दर्शित-पशुवातम् ।

केनैव धृत-बुद्ध-मरीर ।

जय जगदीश हरे ॥

neglect and ruin, was appropriated about the year 1590 A. D. by a Saiva Mohant<sup>29</sup> whose successors hold it to this day. Buddha images are worshipped as 'Pandavas' in a shrine in its compound. The adjoining Bakraur doab, where once stood Buddhist stupas and an 'Asokan' pillar, is now a Hindu tirtha with the name of *Dharmaranya*, as noted in Chapter VI.

When Buchanan visited the site the Buddhist shrines lay in ruin and neglect, except that the king of Ava had sent some officers to report on it, and some of the statues had been collected in the Mohant's math and saved from injury.<sup>30</sup> It was not till 1876 that, at the instance of the King of Ava, the Government of Bengal set to repair the temple and put it in the condition in which we see it today. The archaeological supervision of the operation was done by Dr. Rajendra-lala Mitra, whose book, *Bodhgaya*, like Cunningham's *Mahabodhi*, is a mine of information about this shrine and its antiquities. The repairs were completed in 1880.

### The Mahabodhi Temple

The temple is 180 feet high and 50 feet square at the base, rising from a platform, on the four corners of which are smaller towers of the same shape as the temple (Fig. 15). It is made of bricks and plastered over. The outside walls are relieved by niches with statues in them. The temple faces the east and has an antechamber and a *torana* in front. At its back is the Bodhi tree with the Vajrasana below it. The railing round the temple was made of stone in the 'Asokan' style and decorated with fine carvings (Fig. 16). It once enclosed a quadrangle 145 feet by 108 feet, much of which has disappeared. Some sculptures are housed in a shed to the north.

### The Vajrasana

It is said to be a work of the Kusana age (first century A. D) and consists of a polished and richly carved stone slab placed on a raised platform. A carved door frame stands on the west edge of the platform. In the plinth below the frame there is a relievo on either

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29. *History of Bodhgaya Math* by Ramanugrahanarayan Singh and G. A. Grierson, 1892, p. 1

30. Buchanan's *Journal*, p. 52.

side representing a Nagaraj holding a vessel of water which was identified with the Kulika Nagaraj of Buddhist literature by Mr. Akshaya Kumar Maitra.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Bodhi tree**

This tree, venerated by all Buddhists, is well-known in their plastic art and literature. It is said that the Bodhi tree at Anuradhapur in Ceylon has grown out of a branch of this tree which was taken there and planted by Prince Mahendra, a thing not at all impossible for a tree of the *Ficus* class. According to the Buddhist legends the tree was destroyed more than once, first by Queen Tisyaraksita out of jealousy at King Asoka's inordinate attachment to it, and again, according to Hiuen Tsang, by King Sasanka of Gauda; and most people think that the present tree is but a substitute for the original one.

### **Sculptures on the Railing**

The railing, which dates from the time of the Sungas (first century B. C.) if not that of Asoka, consists of neatly chiselled pillars and bars of stone. At the top, the middle and the bottom of the pillars there are medallions depicting scenes from Buddha's life and other themes, as explained by Dr. Foucher and other scholars. Some of these sculptures are of special interest for the artistic skill that they exhibit or the vogue that they had in the succeeding ages. Such, for instance, is the figure of Sri or Gaja-Laksmi consisting of a female with an elephant on either side, or that of Surya in a car of four horses (Fig. 17), or the Kirtimukha (Fig. 18). The first and the last occur in some seals and sculptures of later days.

### **The Antiquities in the Mohants's Math**

This collection referred to by Buchanan contains several valuable relics, a few of which are described below.

(1) The Bodh-Gaya inscription of about 1190 A. D. of King Jayacchandra, which is built into a wall of the math.

(2) The image of Nagaraj Muchalinda protecting Buddha from rain. Buddha is represented as sitting cross-legged on the coils of the Nagaraj, who holds his seven-branched hood over the ascetic's

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31. *Bharata-varsa*, Kartik, 1335, p. 689.

head. There is an inscription on the pedestal from which Mr. Banerji ascribed the image to the eighth century.<sup>32</sup>

(3) The image of Kulika Nagaraj, similar to the one below the Vajrasana.

(4) A colossal image of the goddess Trailokya-vijaya which represents the deity as having three heads (the fourth one behind not being shown) and eight hands, standing over a *mithuna* in the *yuva-yuma* or gestation pose, the male figure of the couple wearing a *jatamukuta*, and holding a trident in his hand. The goddess holds respectively a *chakra*, a bow, a noose and a bell in her right hands, and a *vajra*, a quiver of arrows, a goad and a sword in her left hands. She has a garland of Dhyani Buddhas, and the *jatamukuta* and three eyes in each head. This image is an inscribed one.

(5) The image of Yamantaka, who is represented as riding a buffalo. He has six fierce-looking heads with matted hair turned upwards and beard, and wears a tiger skin and a garland in which human heads alternate with lotus or *chakra*. He has six hands; the three right ones hold respectively a sword, a *vajra* and a staff. Two of the left hands are broken off.




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32. *Pravasi*, Magh, 1334, p. 540.



# KURKI HAR, GAYA AND BODH-GAYA



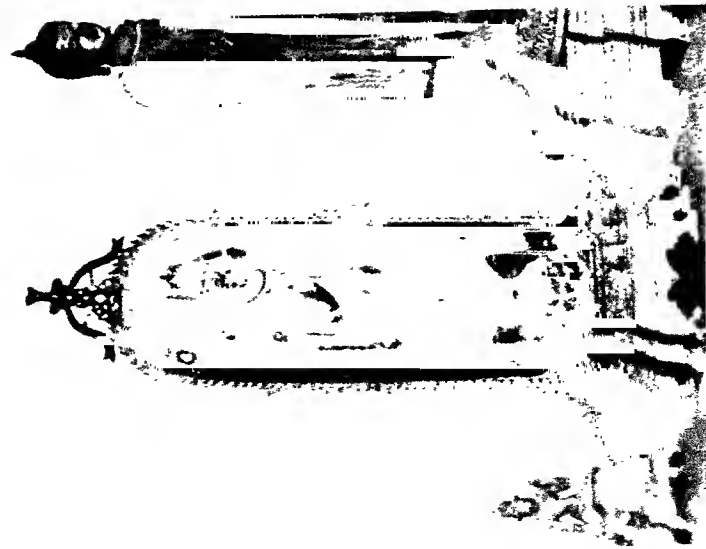
1. Find-sp of Brames, 1940 (p 5)  
Kurki har.



2. Gilt bronze Manjusri from  
Mahasthan (p 8)  
(Varendra Research Society)



# KURKI HAR, GAYA AND BODHI-GAYA



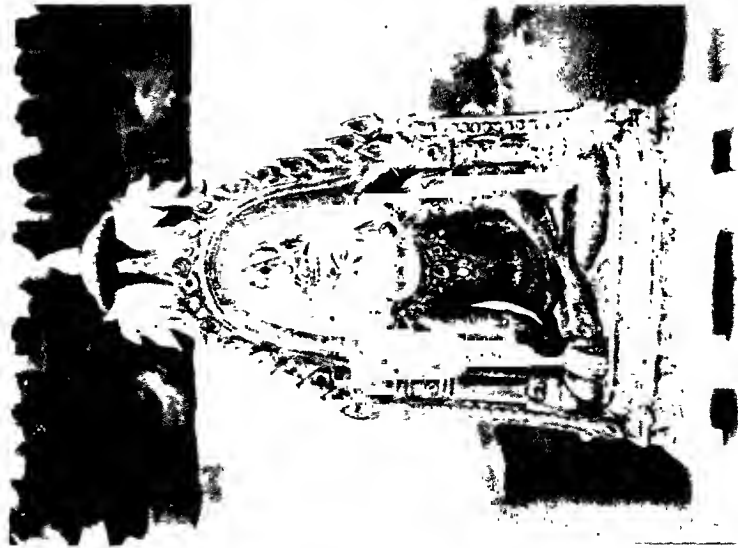
3 (centre) Bronze, standing Buddha (p. 11)  
 (right) Early type of Buddha (p. 8, fn.)  
 (left) Miniature, Avalokitesvara



4 Bronze Buddha's descent from  
 Tusita heaven (p. 11)



# KURKI HAR, GAYA AND BODH GAYA



5. Bronze, seated Buddha (p. 13)



6. (centre) Bronze, four-handed Avalokitesvara (p. 16)  
(right) Early type of Buddha (p. 8, fn )



# KURKIHAR, GAYA AND BODH-GAYA



7 Bronze Balarama (p. 19)



8. Stone Baghesvari or Ganesa-janani (p. 22)  
Devishan





# KURKIHAR, GAYA AND BODHI-GAYA



9 (centre) Stone Aśoka (p. 25)  
(right) Six-handed Avalokitesvara (p. 27)  
Devasthan



10. Stone, two-handed Avalokitesvara (p. 26)  
Devasthan



# KURKI HAR, GAYA AND BODH-GAYA



11. (centre) Stone Four-handed Avalokitesvara (p. 40)  
(right) Six-handed Avalokitesvara (p. 27)  
(left) Buddha.

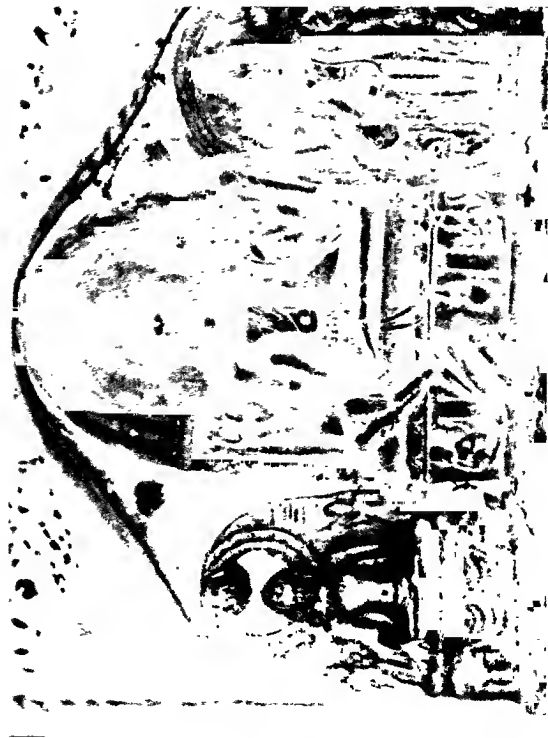
Pretsila Hill



12. Stone Jambhala (p. 28)  
Devasthan



# KURKI HAR, GAYA AND BODH-GAYA



11. (centre) Stone Four-handed Avalokitesvara (p. 40)  
 (right) Six-handed Avalokitesvara (p. 27)  
 (left) Buddha.

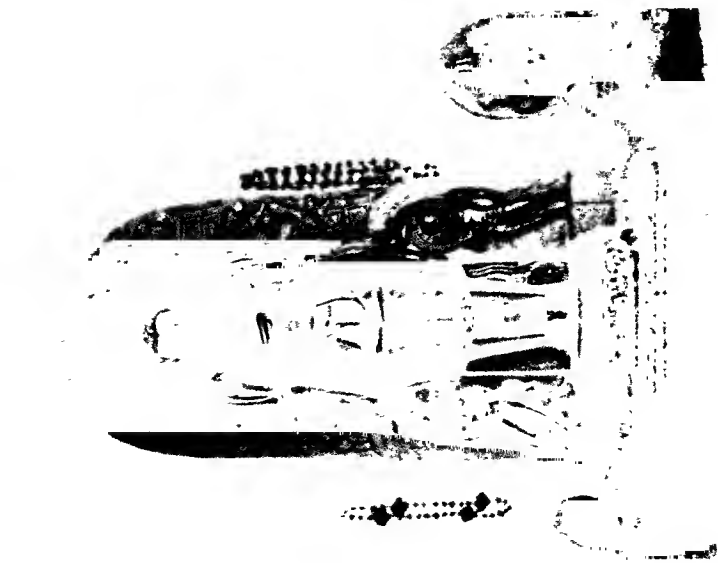
Pietala Hill



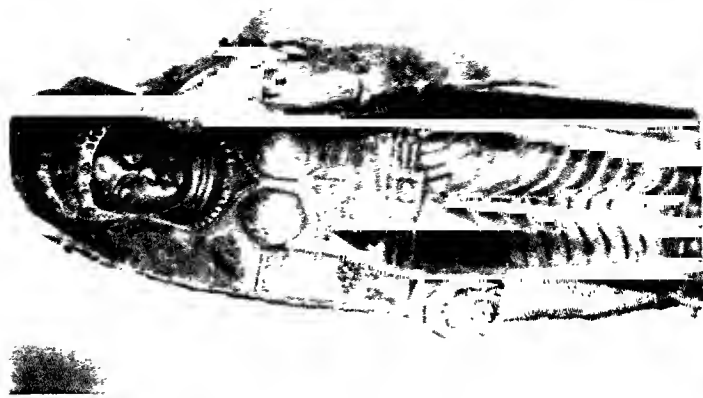
12. Stone Jambhala (p. 28)  
 Devasthan



# KURKI HAR, GAYA AND BODH-GAYA



13. (centre) Four-handed Vishnu Purna-mandir  
near Gadadhara (p. 46)

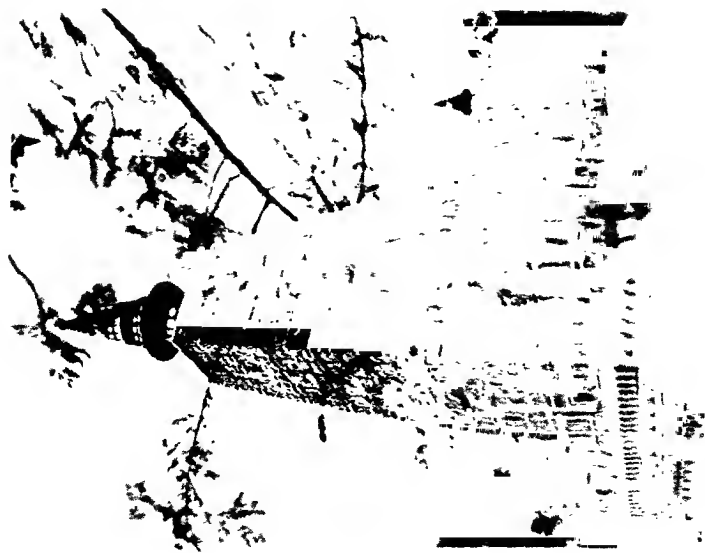


14. Kumari-devi, near Gadadhara (p. 47)





KURKIAR, GAYA AND BODHI-GAYA



15 Mahabodhi temple, Bodhi-Gaya (p. 54)



16. Stone railing, Bodhi-Gaya (p. 54)



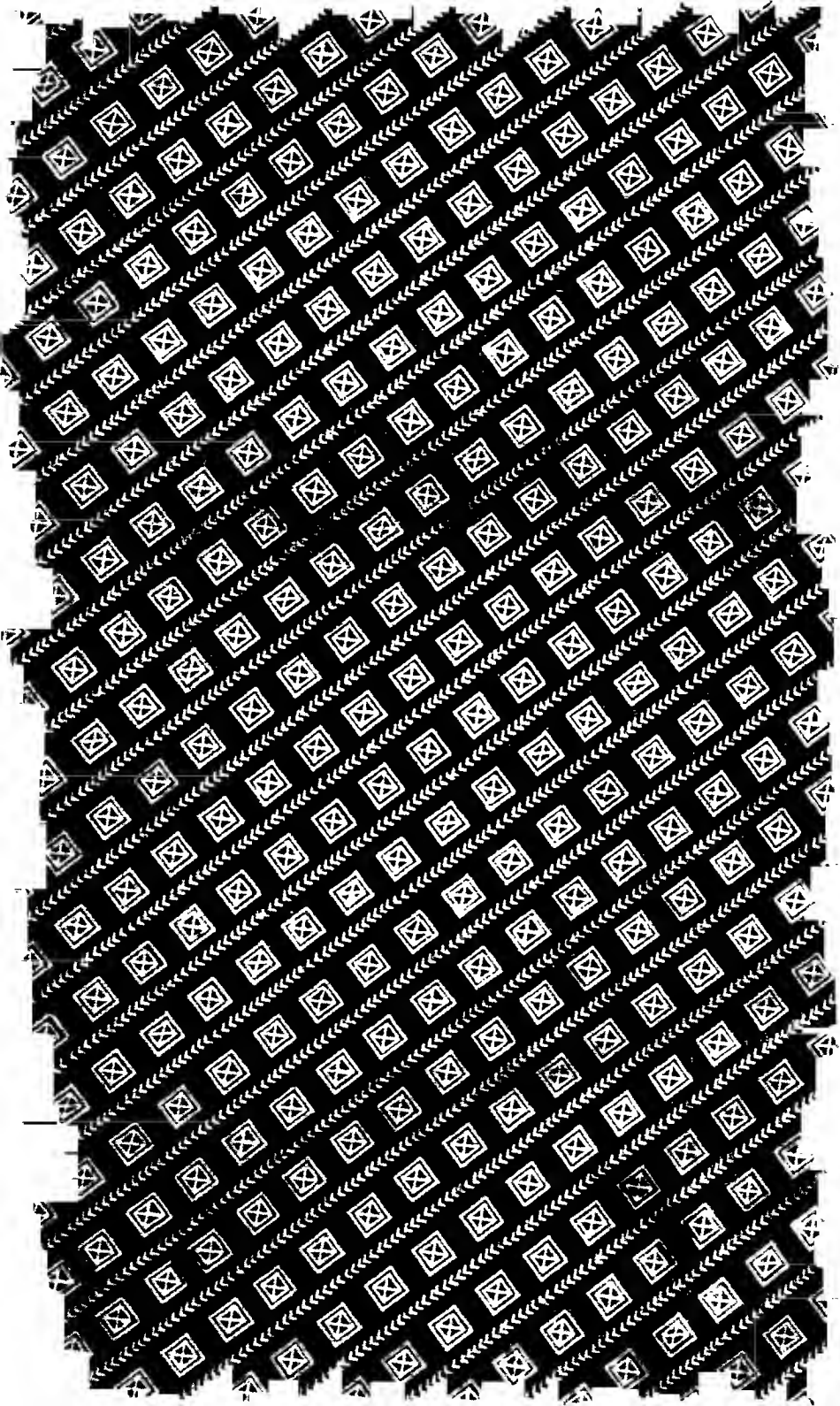
# KURKI HAR, GAYA AND BODH-GAYA



17. Kirtimukha, stone railing, Bodh-Gaya  
(p. 55)



18. Stone Surya with four horses  
Bodh-Gaya (p. 55)



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